

SIDDHANTA SAIVAM

IN

ESSENCE

AND

MANIFESTATION

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Dedicated to

Thiru

Beloved in Thillai Natarajah

PREFACE

Saiva Siddhantam has been generally acclaimed as one of the finest expositions of a reasoned, religious philosophy found anywhere in the world.

The Essence of Siddhanta Saivam, as enshrined in the hoary wisdom of Tirumular's Tirumantiram, and in the condensed aphorisms twelve of singular beauty of Meikanda Deva's Sivajnana Botham, has been presented by us in these series of Lectures in relation to modern thought.

While Tirumular proceeded by a rare intuitive insight to formulate the truths underlying the macrocosmic realities, in order to interpret the verities of *Pati Pasu* and *Pasam*, Meikanda Deva sought to postulate the universal principles underlying the ultimate realities of Saiva Siddhantam. When we delved into their assertions, we steered clear of abstract arguments, and dogmatic theory at the instance of Tirujnanasambandar's insistence that,

‘Our God is self-luminous’.

‘ஏதுக்களாலும் எடுத்த மொழியாலும் மிக்குச்
சோதிக்க வேண்டா சுடர்விட்டுள்ள எங்கள் சோதி ...

Both Tirumular and Meikanda Deva and his disciples sought to interlink the salient principles of Siddhanta Saivam on the bedrock of Love, divine Love, as the highest common factor.

அன்பே சிவமாவ தாருமறிந்தபின்
அன்பே சிவமாய மர்ந்திருந்தாரே.
Realising that Love art Sivam
Repose in Love as Siva. - Tirumantiram.

அயரா அன்பின் அரன்கழல்செலுமே.
Immersed in constant Love, It attains the Feet of Siva.
- Sivajnana Botham. XI.

The bliss or ananda-*Brahmam* is *ananda*-extolled in the Taittireya Upanisad is but an expression of the Love ineffable put forward by our Siddhantic seers in their canonical Hymns and Sastras. The essence of Love manifests within and without in countless ways and Manicavasagar, Tirujnanasambandar, Appar and Sundarar shine as the highest epitome of Love. Their Hymns communicate the sublime revelations vouchsafed to man.

Siddhanta's supreme insight into the heart of Truth has been explored by us from vertical and horizontal dimensions, so as to unfold the essence and manifestations manifold of the robust philosophy of Siddhanta Saivam.

We next focused the searchlight of the seekers on the investigation of the outer world and the inner world and the techniques adopted by the Siddhantic Seers to resolve the conflicts and establish concord once and for ever.

The ‘extensive continuum of potentialities’ of anma and mala lying at the Feet of Siva in the state of involution has been proved beyond doubt by the authors of Sivajnana Botham and Sivajnana Siddhiar.

ஒடுங்கி மலத்துளதாம் தாரகமாம்
அத்தன் தாள் நிறறல்.

This ‘extensive continuum’ evolves by the intersection of the Causal Power of Siva, and we penetrated into the relational complex of *Pasa-Sambandam* merging into *Pasu-Sambandam*, and onwards to *Pati-Sambandam*, in which finally, all potential objectifications find their culmination. Next, we took up the play of divine Grace which has been acknowledged as one of the cardinal tenets of Saiva Siddhantam. The manifestation of Grace releases currents of verifiable spiritual Experiences so profound and significant, that Saiva Siddhantam gains its entry into the realm of perennial Philosophy.

Manifold are the acts of manifestation of the Transcendent Siva, who is Immanent as well, and diverse too are the avenues of realisation for the anma. But the accomplished End is the At-one-ment with Siva.

‘Inseparably knit at His Radiant Feet’

So spake the Seers – என்மனார்புலவர்.

My sincere thanks are due to the former Vice-Chancellor Dr. S. Chandrasekar and to the syndicate for their permission to publish the series of Saiva Siddhanta Lectures delivered under the Tiruppanandal Adhinam Endowment Fund at the Benares Hindu University and the Allahabad University in 1976.

My thanks must go to Dr. Aru. Alagappan, Reader, Department of Tamil and Officer in charge of Publications for his great help in bringing out this volume.

Ilangoi Ratna Ammaiyar Navaratnam

Thai Poosam 28-1-1979
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1. SAIVA FRONTIERS

Saiva Frontiers expand on all directions, from the Vedas and Agamas to the Epics and Puranas, and from the canonical works of the Saiva Saints known as Tirumurais to philosophical treatises of the mediaeval Santanacaryas.

Beyond the Ganges to Mount Kailash and further than Rameswaram and Lankapuri to the lost continent of Lemuria, embracing the many sides of the Indian and Pacific oceans and touching the very ancient cultures of the Incas and Sumerians lie the ever-expansive borders of 'Sivadom'. The supreme Siva reigns everywhere and yet nowhere. That is the glory of Saivism, and the potency of Siddhanta Saivism, and it is not an easy task to scale its heights in the span of three lectures to the august assembly at the Benares Hindu University.

Here in Benares, we see the burning ghats of the Ganges, sacred river to the Hindus, who believe that it flows gracefully from the matted locks of Siva. We are in the Sivapura of Kasi-Visvanath, the Lord Supreme of the Universe. In a world of light and darkness, one hears ever and anon the still sad music of humanity punctuating the momentary flashes of sensual delights. In the midst of the feverish groans that one hears on the banks of the Ganges, overlooking the temple of Kasi-Visvanath, where people come to shed their mortal coils, one realizes the stranglehold of the bonds (pasam) that afflict the life of man on earth. The truth dawns that though man is subject to the limitation of change and decay and to the effect of deeds (good and bad), with the egoity or the I-ness of the individual self-exerting its utmost, he cannot be overpowered indefinitely by these phenomena of the world of mind and matter; for he is immortal; that which moves the self and all creation is immortal, and that by which he is moved and acted upon is also eternal.

Kasi or Benares typifies the reality of *God is - I am - The world is*, which is the significant principle on which Siddhanta-Saivism takes its root. In the words of Sankara, Benares is the point of reintegration of existence in Siva; a fulfilling in 'divinis' of the Soul. He expresses the greatness of Benares in one of his hymns thus:

*“That which is the ceasing of mental
agitation and supreme peacefulness;
That which is the Manikarnika,
bathing ghat and pilgrimage par excellence;
That which is the primordial most pure
Ganges, the river of knowledge.
This it is which is Benares, inborn wisdom.
And This it is which I am”.*

The Call of Visvanath

This abode of Kasi is presided over by the Supreme Lord Siva, at once the Destroyer, Creator and Sustainer of all that exists; it symbolises the all-consuming powers of Siva to destroy, dissolve and resolve the phenomenal existence, and this aspect of Siva is brought to the fore by the sight of the burning dead bodies in the ghats of the Ganges. He directs the cremation of the non-real in order to realize the Real.

Kasi Visvanath reigneth supreme with His consort of Power-Annapurni, from the beginningless time to the eternal Now-in principle-the one Absolute without a second.

We have come from the Island of Lanka where ‘Once upon a time’, Ravana ruled despotically. He was an ardent Sivabhakta whose devotion to Siva was so profound, that it made him lift the Abode of Siva, Mount Kailas, so that he may carry Siva-Sakti, the Omega and the Alpha of all existential beings, to his own land of Lankapuri, and because his devotion was tinged with pride and conceit, Siva vanquished his vanity.

The pure Love of Siva fuses with the love of the Anma according to Tirumular, and the constant and meek love of the Anma for Siva ignites the pure Love of Siva according to Karaikal Ammaiyar. Ravana’s love for Siva was tainted with self-love and hence his downfall. Love must be untarnished; it must be free from falsehood, pride, lust and ego-(*pasam*).

My treatment of Saivism is based on this equation formulated in the Saiva Scriptures that *Love art Sivam*. It is not the equation of the attribute of love with the substance of Siva. It is the equation of the eternal anma infused with love, with the eternal Siva-Pati whose essence is love. The quest of the Real gives meaning to the equation. Reality is not-one, not-two, but *non-dual*. The equation is of the love-infused anma realizing its non-dual union in the light of love which art Sivam. It is the end of the philosophical quest-*Sidd-Antam*. Illumined consciousness gravitates on pure awareness-*Cit-Antam*. Such is the quintessence of Saiva Siddhantam.

In the land of Lanka live the orthodox Saivites, whose beliefs, rituals, and faith are established on the edifice of Saiva Siddhantam, unblemished and undiluted by permutations or conjunctions of the varied sects and *dharsana* of Hinduism, which prevail in the motherland of India. Saivism lives in the North and East of Lanka in its pristine purity and as its ambassador, I convey the message of all true Saivities, the blooms of grateful love to the revered founder of the Tirupanandal Adinam and its present esteemed Head, Srila Sri Kasi Vasi Muttucumara Swami Tambiran, for conceiving and perpetuating these series of Endowment lectures on the glory of Saivism and its living significance today.

I bow in humble prostration at the singular honour conferred on me to deliver these series of Endowment Lectures this year (1976) before this august assembly in this hallowed seat of Learning., The rediscovery of hidden values in Saivism is of perennial interest to all seekers of Truth. Saivism as a way of life has attracted in recent years, the youth as well as the sadhakas from the East and West. Christ and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa spoke in parables, and communicated the celestial message of man’s intimate communion with the Maker, Father and Mother Divine, to the seekers in the periphery of their quest of God. While Buddha and Mohamed uttered their ‘*upadesham*’-sermons in He-and-I dialogic discourses, what did the Hindu Rishis of old, the Vedic Seers do? They built up a Guru-Sishya relationship, and meditated on their Knower, and communicated their experiences of the Known, in sublime dialogue and chanting; and the Saivites expressed the unutterable perception of Truth of the Three-in-One, Knower, Knowledge and Known, by symbols and myths so rich in meaning and faith and in their canonical Hymns called “The Twelve Thirumurais”. Their quest of Ever-Rest in Siva culminated in their conquest of Everest. Their revelations formed the basis of Saiva Siddhantam.

‘Kadavul’ is a Tamil word for denoting the transcendental and immanent aspects of the Godhead. It means that which is beyond thought, word and action. Siva is transcendental-

Kadavul. In another sense, the word expresses “that which moves everything”. It connotes the immanence of God in the world. Yet in a more subtle sense, the word ‘*Kada-vul*’ implies introspect and realise the Indweller within. In the same manner, the term *Maya* in Saiva terminology means *Mai*- to conceal, and *ya* - to become. Thus, *Maya* means not illusion, but the fundamental substratum of matter into which everything resolves itself by involution, and from which everything evolves in course of time. The philosophic connotations of these Tamil terms bring out the salient features of Siddhanta Saivam. The cardinal tenets of the Saiva Siddhanta system figure in one of the earliest books extant in Tamil-Tholkappiam, and the terms *Kadavul*, *Uyir* (soul) *Mei* (truth) *Vinai*, (bonds of deeds) *Kandazi* (formless - form of God) occur frequently, as also in the classic Tirukural.

Thus arose the popular form of Saivism with its Temple worship, adoration of Linga, pujas and festivals and the congregation of Saivites. Sivathondar or Meidiyar shared their experiences and kept the vibration of the Divine Power alive in its impact upon society and individuals. In this way arose the *Madams* and *Devasiriya Mandapams*, *Mutts* and *Adiyar* circles conforming their worship to the Agamas - spiritual revelations of Saivism, and symbology assumed great significance. That everything had its exoteric and esoteric meanings, the outer and the inner dimension of understanding Truth can only be fully understood, if we truly apprehend Saiva concepts of Divine Power and the intersection of power - centres with bearers of divine power.

The Saiva Landscape

The philosophical ideas of Saiva Siddhantam are enshrined in the exquisite hymns of the realised Saiva Saints from the third and fourth centuries onwards. One of the earliest works Thirumular’s Tirumantiram, a work of three thousand stanzas by St. Tirumular who deals with the theoretical and practical aspects of Saiva religion and philosophy, in which we find the use of the expression ‘Saiva Siddhantam’ for the first time in Saiva Texts. “Jnanamirtham” too is one of the earliest treatises which deals with the concepts of Siddhanta in an authoritative manner.

When Saivism had its heyday from the Mohenjadarro and Harappa civilization. Siva and Sakthi - the Essence and Manifestation-had direct appeal and approach. The Kumara - Sambhava is an instance in point. The Tejas of Siva was borne by vayu to the saravanai pond, where the six sparks were nursed by Karttigai mothers till Siva-Sakti (Parvati) made the six into one whole, known as Karttikeya. Here the Power-Centre and bearer of Power became one for the destruction of the Asura forces. It is a grand equation of manifestation and essence of Sivam in and through Sakti. When life grew more and more complex, the seers hid their communication and revelations in allegory and symbols for fear of casting pearls before swine, and in the maze of imagery and symbology, Saivism became a far-off cry and divorced from life. There came the inundation of the Buddhists and Jains, and it was so easy to lead the Saivites from their fold, as already they had strayed from the fold. It was the lost sheep that could be lost again and again, and so Saiva Kings were converted and the land overrun by Buddhist Viharas and Jain Monasteries, and social institutions sprang up to propagate these alien religious faiths in the Pandya, Chera and Chola territories of the Tamils.

The lucid experiential hymns of the Nayanmar are based upon the realization of truth according to Siddhanta-Saivam, and the magnum opus known as “Periyapuranam” embodied the Saiva tenets as lived and communicated by these realized Saiva Seers. These Nayanmars, especially the Select Four or *Nalvar*, revived Saivam to its pristine glory and beauty. These

walking minstrels of Siva were active participants in His Grace, and shared their nectarine experiences with the masses. It was not the cloistered few who monopolized the riches of the Kingdom of Siva. They were within the common people's experiences, for all were children of Siva, servitors of Siva, companions and co-inheritors of Siva's Grace. Their Devarams or Holy Hymns sung at different temples and effecting miraculous transformation in the community, home, and individual, acted like a deluge sweeping aside all extraneous religious experiments in its irresistible stride to reveal the "thief", the "beloved" who had taken His abode in the core of each living being. Saiva Siddhantam had its fullest relevance to life from the age of Thirujnana Sambandar, when Saivism was practiced, lived and experienced, rather than discoursed upon, preached or inculcated from outside.

Following this revival, there arose the school of Philosophers, who codified and systematized the philosophy of Saivism known as Suddha-Saiva Siddhanta. From the intuitive insight of the great Devaram Saints and Nayanmars, arose the Commentators and Philosophers like St. Meikanda Deva whose scholastic penetration of the truths contained in Saivism were embodied in the 'Sastras' - or treatises on Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy. The fourteen Sastras unfold the quintessence of the goal of Saivism and the means (Sadhana) for attaining the goal, the accomplished End.

Truth is declaimed and asserted in conformity with the 'Sutra', *i.e.*, Vedas and Agamas; Again, all possible refutations are cited and logically disproved. Then follows the 'Sadhana' phase, when details relating to the abstract and the personal level of experience are worked out. At this stage, Puranic recitations, the cult of Temple worship and the impact of Siva Circles of Adiyars, pilgrimages and 'Teerthas, festivals and rituals, like diksha (initiation) and fasts enjoined in Saivism took pre-eminence.

Finally follow the culmination of Experience in serene love and communion, when the ego-consciousness is fully transmuted to Siva-consciousness. This is termed the Suddha Advaita, or the inseparable union of Siva in Sakti. and Anma in Siva. This is the accomplished End, and this system came to be known as Saiva Siddhantam. The consummation of the realised seers-Siddhars-unfolds an inseparable communion of Siva and Anma, and this is the goal of every Saivite. Our concern with the essence of the Truth of Saivism gains in depth in so far as its manifestation in the lives of Saiva Seers, proves its validity and relevance to our lives.

The First Approach

We shall now commence to contour the immeasurable domain of Siva and Anma, in Essence and in manifestation, for both are independent facets of Truth Supreme, which give value to the currency of Saivism.

"Vasi yillak kasu vendam" -

"I do not want the gold coins without the proper seal".

- St. Appar.

Intrinsically the coin may be valuable but in circulation, it is devaluated. We shall make a critical study of this most potent aspect of Hinduism-the living religion of Siva, and survey its cross fertilization of theory and practice in the lives of the Saivites today.

The essence extracted from the fruit-of Jnana-the wisdom gained by insight, culminates in ecstatic bliss. After having understood the essence and intuited the Real, we shall examine significant fields of manifestations of Siva's power.

The philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta does not shun the myths and puranic stories that constitute the concretized wisdom of the Saiva seers, and the symbolic portrayal of eternal truths which have been intuited by the sages. The Hindu tradition invests myths with a historical character, and expounds them with the conviction of religious verity. These myths form the body of reference in the Hymns of the Saiva Saints, who depict Siva as the preeminent God in the Hindu pantheon. The story of Dhaksha yaga, Tripura Samhara, the pillar of Light (Linga) whose beginning and end, not even Brahma and Vishnu could scan, the blue-throated Siva termed 'Neelakanta' who quaffed the poison arising from the sea of Milk to save the Gods from annihilation - these are puranic incidents which bring out the philosophy of Siva's Essence in manifestation, as also the inspiring references to Siva's heroic feats known as "Atta Virattanam". They reveal His manifestation of Grace to all seekers of absolute Truth.

A background knowledge of these popular references is absolutely necessary to understand and apprehend the import and impact of Saivism on the people of India and Ceylon. The philosophy of Saiva Siddhantam with the crest - jewel of the Meikanda Sastras is built on the superstructure of the Saivagamas and Siva Puranas. Almost all the Puranic stories relating to Siva can be brought under the "Atta- Virattanam", the eight heroic feats. Siva is Tripurantaka, Daksari, Kamantaka, Gajaha, Jalandharari, Kalasamhara, Andhakari and Brahma Siraschedana. These stories explain with an absolute ring of conviction, the Absolute Siva as the highest, greatest Divine power, whose acts depict His Grace and abiding relationship to man. The Devaram saints have eulogized in their psalms these manifestations of Siva who is indissolubly united with Sakti, who is the Power of Siva. He is also revealed in the forms of Ganesa. Karttikeya, Virabhadra, Bhiksatana, Dakshinamurti, Natarajah, Neelakandan and Somaskandan, as well as in His neutral aspect of the Siva Linga.

Thus, we conclude that the Agamic sources and that of mythology communicate the sadhana aspect (spiritual effort) of Saivism, and the Tirumurais considered as the revealed words of the realised seers constitute the fundamental backbone to the philosophical tenets enunciated in Saiva Siddhanta Sastras, and which have been codified by the great Achariyas, Meikanda Deva, Arulnandhi Sivachariar and Umapathi Sivam of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The Saiva tradition is unbroken from the quest of Reality of the Devaram epoch to that of the Saiva Advaita Philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta Sastras. The goal of *Sivatvam* has been in vogue from prehistoric ages, and the sadhana or the practice leading to *Sivadvaitam* also has had a continuous tradition, especially in South India and Ceylon. The Means and End have been logically formulated by St. Meikanda Deva and his worthy successors in the Meikanda Sastras, as did St. Thomas Aquinas whose theological summation of Christianity is held as a masterly exposition of the philosophy of the Christian Religion before the Reformation epoch.

2. THE ESSENCE OF SIDDHANTAM

The Archway

St. Meikanda Deva inaugurated the modern approach to the Siddhanta Philosophical movement by his classic, *Sivajnana Botham*, in the thirteenth century. The work consists of twelve Sutras combined with logical propositions in prose, and eighty-one verses in Venba metre- St. Meikanda Deva taught his philosophy to forty-nine ‘Sishyas’ including the eminent Arulnandi Sivachariar, Author of *Sivajnana Siddhiar*, a detailed commentary of Sivajnana Botham, the basic tenets of Siddhanta truths and these came to be known as the standard Saiva Siddhanta Sastras, fourteen in number. Two of these Tiruvundiar by St. Uyavanda Deva and Tirukalitruppiadiar by his disciple Tirukadavur Uyavanda Deva were earlier to Sivajnana Botham, and were written as a result of the illuminating spiritual experiences of their Authors, in conformity with their pursuit of Siddhanta principles.

The twelve Sutras of Sivajnana Botham are divided into four parts. The first part deals with the existence of God, Soul and Bonds. The second part treats of their nature and attributes. The third section takes up the method of pursuing the truth and the fourth with the realization of the supreme goal of Truth, so that the last Six sutras relate to the aspect of spiritual experiences.

St. Umapati Sivachariar of Chidambaram, in the direct line of St. Meikanda deva’s disciple’s disciple is the Author of eight of the fourteen Saiva Sastras, and in Sivaprakasam, his first work, he enunciates the essence of Siddhanta Saivam in one hundred stanzas. He expounds the nature of Saiva Siddhantam in one stanza with great lucidity.

“We intend to expound herein the truths of the Saiva Siddhanta system, the distilled essence of the Vedas and which is dark to unbelievers and bright to the adherents of inner creeds and satisfying the reputed standards of logic. It is remarkable for advocating the inseparable ‘Advaitic’(two-less) union of God and the Anma, as will not warrant their substantial identity like gold and jewels made of it, or any midway relation like that of word and sense. The ‘Advaitic’ union will be comparable in their *unity* to the blending of body and soul, in their *diversity* to the light of the eye and the light of the sun, and in their *concomitance* to the knowing power of the soul and seeing power of the eye. The Advaitic relation will be realizable as the fruit of a course of righteous practice ordained by the great books of wisdom”.

Sivaprakasam defines Pati, Pasu and Pasam in the first fifty stanzas. The second part elucidates the special nature of the Soul and God, the methods of approaching the supreme Pati and realising His bliss, and the peculiar traits of the great seers who have realised the truth of Sivam.

We give below the essence of the main tenets of Saiva Siddhantam in a free translation, and a brief commentary of the twelve sutras contained in St. Meikanda Deva's classic on Siddhanta Saivam, known as Sivajnana Botham. The twelve aphorisms enunciate in a nutshell the quintessence of the Philosophy and Practice of Saivam.

Sivajnana Botham

- Sutra I.** The world of He She and It
Involved with the three operations
Of origination, development and dissolution
Dissolves into the primordial material (maya)
From which final phase revolves the beginning.
- That God is at once the content of faith and also what can cause
such faith is the gist of the first Sutra. He is the thought of all
thinking within the mind.
- Sutra II.** The Lord being one with the anma, immanent yet different from them
abides in inseparable union with the creative Energy- Aajnai- which
impels the anma to experience 'going and coming' - birth and death, due
to their deeds good and bad, performed by mind, thought and body.
- Sutra III.** The Anma Exists and is encased in the body composed of primordial
matter.
- Sutra IV.** The Anma is not one of the four mental faculties - manas, buddhi,
chittam and ahankara, yet it is closely associated with them and with
other evolutes of Maya like a king with his ministers.
- Sutra V.** The Anma, though acting on the five senses, is not perceived by them.
Similarly, the anma though activated by the Lord's Energy (Tami-Arul,
Grace Divine) does not perceive the Absolute Lord. Like the iron in the
presence of the magnet is the Anma.
- Consciousness arises when Anma and Antakaranas meet. God is
the all-mover and he witnesseth what He moves. He is the mover
of the Sakti-Powers in man. Until there is such a complete
surrender of the human will to the Divine Will as will efface
differentiation, there must be much contrariness of purpose, a
warring of wills and assertiveness of self-conflicts and tensions.
Anma-Rupa, Anma-Suddhi and *Anma-Dharsan* are the stages of
spiritual discrimination when God's Will becomes paramount,
and all acts of the Anma are God-directed.
- Sutra VI.** What is knowable by *Pasa-Jnana* or sense perception and by *Pasu-
Jnana* or anma's conditioned knowledge is *Asat*, the non-real. Though
God is beyond the comprehension of sense-conditioned knowledge, yet
He is known by divine knowledge *Pati-Jnana*, which is immediate
knowledge of God, imparted to the anma by divine grace.
- It is only when man's love encounters Grace, that he becomes
aware of God's abiding Love.
- Sutra VII.** In the presence of the Real, everything else is non-existent and so the
Real does not know them. The non-real is not, and so, it cannot know

the Real. That which perceives both is either of them. The anma is thus *satasat*.

Anma-darshan is to distinguish itself from non-real and real and to know itself and then it lifts into the plane of the Real. It is termed Sivajnana or the knowledge of Sivam.

Sutra VIII.

As a result of its meritorious life, the Anma encounters the Primal One, who hitherto was indirectly guiding its destiny, but who at the proper moment appears as the Guru. He illumines the Anma of its enfeeblement and of its ensnarement by the wayward senses, and consequent deviation from its pristine state. Thereupon the anma gives up its erst-while associations and realising his inalienable stature (King's Son), the awakened Anma approaches the Feet of Hara.

Here is affected enlightened Anma's insight and intuitive knowledge of the Pure Being-God. It is the stage of attaining divine awareness.

Sutra IX.

The Lord who cannot be apprehended by finite knowledge or sense perception must be contemplated by spiritual insight. At that stage, the association with the finite is eliminated, as the vanishing of a mirage. The Lord is the Tree of Life spreading the coolness of refreshing shade. Meditate on the Letters Five as enjoined.

The panacea to free oneself from all ailments is to remember the Source of Being and be in unforgettable awareness. This Sutra proves the efficacy of the Letters Five. Sing Namasivaya and be free from the tribulations of life, which is the result of separation from the Supreme Giver of life and grace. The Letters Five is the passport to the unitive life in Siva, and effects the purification of the soul.

Remembrance of the Letters Five enables Siva's emancipating energy of Grace to work, so that the Anma experiences the effects of the Doer, Deeds done. Fruits, the joys and pangs of embodiment and Siva who brings the deeds home to the Anma. It is ignorance of these four factors that leads man to delusion and self-assertiveness. The light of wisdom set up by Grace will shine in the Anma. Therefor ponder on the Name of Siva and lie hidden in His shade.

Sutra X.

When the Anma in perfect tune with Hara becomes one with Him in complete surrender to Him, and abides in His service - Mala, Maya and Karma fade away. To such devout souls in whom all acts, thoughts and words are instilled with His will, all limitations and effects of deeds will be eliminated effortlessly. This Siva-Neri is the path of excellence; this way to Siva points to the indissoluble union of the Anma with the Lord in complete self-surrender. *Ekanahi Irai Pani Nirtka*. The practice of

spiritual sadhana in the previous sutra develops in the soul true knowledge and love, and God who is Love supernal appears as the Guru and imparts the knowledge of the soul's true nature. The soul attaining such awareness frees itself from the unreal, and reaches the Feet of Sat (Real). These are termed *Iruvinaiooppu*, *Mala Paripagam*, *Satgurudharsan* and *Sattinipadam*. In order to affect the complete removal of its former associations, the soul even in its free state is enjoined to contemplate God by 'Letters Five' or *Sri Panchaksara*. It is esoteric worship and is known as *Soham Bavana*- the correspondence is that between a reality and a symbol. Sutra X treats of the fruit of religious practice. The end is *Veedu* in Tamil which means literally freed- freed from *Pasam* or bondage. By breaking the rope of the swing, the man on the swing reaches the ground. Just so, the soul unites to the Pati by considering all its acts as those of Hara. This is Advaita relation of the soul becoming one with Siva in the Mukti state.

Sutra XI.

"The soul in union with the eye causes it to see, the nature of the eye being to see, when it is caused to see, and the soul itself sees. Similarly, God in union with the soul causes it to know and God Himself knows. Therefore, by love and devotion, in which the soul never forgets, but is in union with God, it attains the experience of divine bliss, the sacred feet of God".

By Advaita knowledge and undying Love, the soul will unite itself to His feet and thus attains 'Anubava' (Pathi-Jnana) or Supreme Bliss. The soul realises the advaita (inseparable) union with Siva through unforgetting love (ayara anbu). There is no supreme experience of union or non-duality apart from Him.

Sutra XII.

"Let the Jivatma after eliminating its mala, which separates it from the feet of the Lord, and mixing in the society of Bhaktas (Jivanmuktar) whose souls abound with love, having got rid of the dark bonds, contemplate their forms and the forms in the temples as His Form".

The liberated (Jivanmuktar) souls will seek the encounter with Sivajnanis and worship them and Siva-Linga in the temple as Siva. Cease not so to worship Him. God is omnipresent and is one with or in advaitic relation with everything, animate and inanimate. The realised seer who sees the objects does not see them though, but only God's presence. In the form of bhaktas God's presence is a living presence. Though he is everywhere, worship Him in forms which excite our love most. Also, the forms in the temples are said to be 'Mantra-Swarupa', Divine idea. Mantras are symbolic representations of the Deity by sound vibrations of the ear, and when the same are converted into symbols for the eye, we get the forms in the Hindu Temples.

The eternal worship in love is the only way of not returning to the grip of the malas. The soul in release consorts with the spiritually enlightened and offers worship at the temples as an expression of non-duality.

St. Meikanda Deva explains that for the enlightened, God is no other than the world. He is not one with the world. Because of the relation of non-duality which includes all these three, all things are His form. Hence worship in love is enjoined. S. B. 12.4.1.

This beatific union in grace-is the Jnana-Nishtai and Umapati Sivacarya in his Sivapragasam explains that these souls will remain in the inflow of Divine Grace. In Thirvarutpayam, the same Author describes this state of freedom as consciousness without thought, and explains that in this state of love, the Jivanmuktas cognise everything outside and inside as One, and out of the intensity of their love for fellow men still in bondage they appear to do ordinary acts like worship while fully immersed in bliss.

These realised seers having experienced the divine bliss, become the epitome of love, which finds outlets in the fellowship of God's devotees and in the worship of God's symbols as God himself. The soul becomes the essence by a social encounter with the Holy men of God. and his symbols.

The last Sutra communicates the Summum Bonum of Siddhanta Saivam, and points the way not only for the liberation of the individual soul but also for service in the world and elevating other souls.

In passing through the grand Archway of Saiva Siddhanta Marga, we have sketched the cardinal tenets of the Saiva doctrine as enunciated by St. Meikanda Deva in Sivajnana Botham.

If we wish to gain entry into the inner citadel of Saiva terrain, we should halt at the archway, and ponder on the salient principles of the Three Entities of Pati, Pasu and Pasam and their inter-relationships as expounded by St. Meikanda Deva in Sivajnana Botham.

The Vital Links

Thus, the subject of *Saivism* is *Siva*, the Primal Agent and only to reflective thought does Siva become the object of the experience that is contemplated. The doctrine of Saiva Siddhantam as laid down in "Siva-Jnana-Botham" of Meikanda Deva and interpreted in Siva-Jnana-Siddhar by Saint Arulnandi Sivachariar, is based on the eternal verities of Pati-Lord; Pasu-Soul; and Pasa-Bond; Siva is the Agent Supreme in relation to the world of man and nature.

The truths expounded thus, are revealed in the knowledge and activity of man in his relation to Siva, the Supreme Pati. Revelations of these Ends are established in the Veda, Agamas and the sacred canonical Hymns called "Tirumurais Twelve", through the lives, words and thought formulae and the personal experience of the 'Seers of Siva and Siva-jnana'. Such Revelations are Validated by the potency of Reason, in conformity with the known and unknown laws of science.

The religious experience adumbrates the goal of man as the attainment of illumination, a progression from the changing to the unchanging, from the many to the One. Saiva Siddhantam postulates with all the force of Reason and Revelation, the Reality of the Supreme Lord, omniscient and omnipresent and his relationship to the eternal verities of Pasu, anma and Pasa (the Bond).

There is coexistence of the three Entities-Pati, Pasu and Pasam which are logically distinct. Pasu (anma) is the ground of distinction between Pati and Pasam. Thus Saivism, as the pathway that leads to the goal or End, is focused on the relationship of Man to the world in which he lives and moves and to the Supreme Agent, who controls as the Agent behind the act of dissolution, dissolving everything with power to reproduce and sustain what has been thus dissolved.

The essence and its manifestation are bound up in the complex of relationships - “*Pati-Sambandam*, *Pasu-Sambandam* and *Pasa-Sambandam*”, and it is this in toto that came to be termed *Siva-Sambandam*. It is to be noted that the Saiva-Siddhanta philosophy and the religious Experience of Saivam are woven in-extricably as the Essence of quality and the Substance, and manifested down the ages, constituting both the centripetal and the centrifugal power of the life of Man on Earth.

3. SIDDHANTA'S CONCEPTS OF POWER

The Power of Siva at work in the Anma of man, and his intimate response generating in the experience of Power, will be examined by us, in our study of Saiva Siddhantam in Essence, and Manifestation in all its varied phases of Cognition, (Arivu) Conation (Icchai) and will (Ceyal) exposed in Activity. From the springboard of the three-dimensional plane of God, Anma and Bond, the Siddhantin scales the altitude of Siva-jnanam, the immediate intuitive Awareness of Sivam, the Absolut Reality. The consequence which the Power of Siva termed Adi-Sakti (Kriya-Sakti) generates in the Anma is registered in all its minute details throughout the phase of evolution, and is marked by the adoption of the primary stages of knowing the knowable, as "Carya, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana". These are the four path ways to realize the Indweller Siva, who is not only immanent but also transcendent and beyond objective perception.

The divine drama and dance of Siva are integral to the human drama of the Soul (Unai-Nadagam) and touch life at every point of radiation. Hence Siddhanta is a practical approach to the attainment of the goal of Siva-jnanam here and now that makes the religion of Saivism so appealing and unique. Secular acts merge in the sacred, and there is no antithesis between what is and what appears to be. Every act, every means in the long process of evolution of the Anma is marked by the experience of Siva's Power, and the belief in Power in the fullest sense is practical and demonstrated in the Lives and works of not only the consecrated Saiva Saints, but also in the lives of the common people, then and now.

The absolute Reality that is Sivam, the efficient Cause, manifests itself as Causal Power through Sakti-another name for Power or Energy that energises things, animate and inanimate of the world of He, She and it, and causes the dissolution of all that is produced, in order to emerge again from that which is dissolved. It operates according to innate law, but is never homogeneous nor uniform. It works as Concealing Power, immanent in the world of matter and spirit; it reveals also as Impersonal Power transcending all things seen and unseen, in real and non-real entities, beyond the ken of empirical verification. Yet to the wonder and amazement of the Anma, its significance expressed as Grace or the "Tiruvadi-jnana", the knowledge of the Real, sought after, and bestowed and substantiated from the standpoint of the phenomenal world, has been revealed in the extraordinary transformations of those who have come under its sway. It is then described, as *anugraha*, as "Arul" or Cit-Sakti, indissolubly linked with Siva, and attracts by its majesty and awe, the love of the Anma, as something holy, beneficent, ancient and divine, and engages against the powers of life that confer their capacity to harm the Anma's intrinsic well-being. These are the innate bonds of Anava, Maya and Karma, and by the power of individuation, delusion and the animation of deeds, hinder the Anma's freedom to attain perfection, with the support of the power of Grace emanating from the Supreme Lord.

We shall seek to understand the Divine Power, connoted as the indissoluble half of Siva, the eternal feminine, Uma-Parvati, Siva-Sakti, Arul-Sakti, Cit-Sakti, the Holy Feet and Tiruvadi, signifying the knowledge of the Real, where the 'I' and mine' concepts of power lie crippled. The potency of Grace is the spiritual footstool and solace for the Anma wrestling with the phenomenal powers, or 'tattvas' at play in the empirical experiences, as well as battling against impediments and constraints which deflect the will or rather the self-assertion of will.

This concept of Grace ‘becomes authenticated’ in persons like St. Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar, and Manikavasagar, and objects like the temples - all repositories of divine powers and whose aim has been to chasten the persons and places, where they lived, moved and had their being. Grace is thus a living reality that can be experienced.

In the sacred Cantos known as “Tirumurai”, the strength and magnitude of divine Grace became expressly postulated and affirmed, and they remain forever the living symbols endowed with the potency of immaculate Siva’s bountiful love and beneficence. The term “Tiru-adi” or “Tiru-Arul” connotes, according to Saiva Siddhanta, the essential texture of what we call sacred or divine power, that is divine wisdom. It is this illuminating light of Grace that gives a unified apprehension of the universe, and Godhead to the Anma. The Anma perceives the changes and processes of the all-inclusive calculus of the universe, as being not arbitrary, but rather a manifestation of a unitary world order, moved by a living Power operating within the universe, and heart of man, and who is in non-dual relationship with the anma.

The Casual Power of Siva generates, nourishes all beings and completes and ripens their karma, cares for and protects them. Tayumanavar calls this ‘Power’, the ground of the universe, and its concealed and motivating Power is described as a virgin, and yet a mother of myriad beings. Its content is no longer empirical but mystical. This power hidden behind the Law of the universe and the world process, is eternally constant, against the chaotic empiricism dominated by the Pasu and Pasam. Saints and sages have extolled the awesome splendour of this flaming energy of Siva, and have established an unshakeable faith in its redemptive purpose.

This power of Siva, known also as Cit-Sakti, operating within the anma subsists in a non-dual relation to its possessor. It is the inherent power in the anma, though superior to it and independent of it. It is a Presence, which needs to be understood in terms of Siva’s will as active Presence. Man is inseparably one with it, in his deepest essence, and soars beyond the limitations of finite existence, I shall quote from St. Manicavasagar who is in intimate relation with Grace, from the Canto of Thillai Decade:

“He filled me with a frenzy of love.
He bound me to His Holy Feet
I was tied up like a meek cow
and the Lord fed me with nectar of bliss.
He purged me from the strain of life.
He freed me from all afflictions.
Thus, liberated, I’ve come to the Liberator
He who holds the mystic Dance at Thillai”. -31

The fundamental concepts of Pati, Pasu and Pasam are lucidly mediated in each of the moving cantos in Tiruvasagam.

Great Siva is the repository of all knowledge and wisdom.
The soul is the recipient of all knowledge,
The reality of the power accessible within man is
the Grace, which is vouchsafed of His Own Will.
It transcends human conditions of knowledge and existence.

The reality of the distinction between liberation (awareness of God in freedom) and bondage (awareness of the world in servitude) implies the reality of anma, a bound being. The categories are connected dialectically with man's freedom. Freedom or deliverance is not so much freedom from the constitutive elements of the Thirty-six constituents of existence (actuality) or from the "will to Live". But rather, from egotism which is the obstructing impediment to freedom.

St. Manikavasagar demonstrates the attitude of being a 'witness' - Sakshi - to the mystery of being and gives himself to the certitude of surrender of subjectivity. Thus, purified of "me and mine", he comes into the awareness of the Supreme will of Siva. "Thiruvacagam", his classic on Grace, depicts not an abandonment of actuality, but a grand transformation and herein, is revealed the essence and its immediate experience by man within himself. Verily, it is a wondrous Testament of the Grace of Siva-Sakti par excelsis.

That philosophical Saivism has its primal rests in the vindication of the reality of Siva's Grace, which vouchsafes the anma's freedom to enjoy union with Siva, has been irrefutably established by Pramana, the acknowledged means of valid knowledge, and by the authority of Revelation and in the experience of the founders of Saivism (Samayacharyas) and the Philosophical Commentators (Santanacharyas) of the Siddhanta Sastras. The Saiva Canonical Treatises have been "Proven" as the unfoldment of the germinal truths communicated in Meykanda Deva's 'Sivajnana Botham', 'Siddhar' of Arunandi Sivacariyar and 'Sivapragasam' of Umapati Sivacharyar. though from the chronological point of view, the revelations of the 'Tirumurais' preceded the philosophical codifications.

Old wine in new Bottles

Having delved into the 'Universal constants', we proceed to revalue them in the perspective of our modern nuclear age of science Today, we are so used to regard as mere dead objects, with which we can deal exactly as we please. The potency of things, the constitutive elements of existence (Tattvas) which possess a law of their own, and their relationship to the spiritual and internal self of man, has to be understood from the "final view" of the Siddhantin, in order to break through the cult of individualism and technocracy, that have refashioned the living self-activated things into lifeless material.

Our examination of the Saiva Treatises confirms that everything that exists is acted upon by the power God-Cit-Sakti, and hence everything may be a Siva is transcendent and also immanent. The power of God activates in every speck of the objective universe. This immanent power of Siva moves things both great and small rhythmically as in a dance

"The majesty of Him who makes each and all
To revolve in rhythmic motion -How shall I evoke?"

- Tiruvacagam V. 2. 15.

Even in the noisy world of our age, God's language makes itself heard. The miracles and words of supplication of the 'Four Elect-Saiva Saints'-Nalvar convey a deep metaphysical meaning, and illustrate the theological value of Praise to Siva. In these rare experiences of the Power of God understood as personal revelations, lie embedded the theology of Saiva Siddhanta, so old and yet so refreshingly new. In the four major Citations of the Name of the Lord by the four Elect, we discern the experience of remembrance of the Letters-five-

Panchaksara in self-effacing incantation. It is a form of union and communion, where the will and the Vac, the spoken word commingle in oneness.

This type of non-dual knowledge of Being is experience by Siva-Conscious Seers, who throb with the reality of Grace. Scientists and Industrialist have, in explorations of their own fields of activity discovered, that man is in inalienable relation with God at the very root of his being. This very truth is reiterated by the Siddhantin, who affirms that Siva-Sakti stands immanently in the anma as the subtle within the gross, as the light of the anma dwelling within the light of the eye, so that it is not possible for the anma to know it through his own knowledge. The removal of the original obscuration or primal ignorance (Anava), has to be worked up through the disciplines of Carya or observance of codes of conduct, kriya or performance of rites and yoga or true contemplation of God which consists of non-dual intuition of God, through inward union with Grace, and grace helped by the onset of Sakti. There is thus an insistence on knowledge, Jnana, as the culmination of the anma's evolution.

These disciplines cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to our modern living, and espousal of any one of them in simultaneity shall only add stature to life in whatever state of environment, for is not the Power of God, in the form of Grace, the fulfilment of the anma's evolution? The graciousness of God is seen in all His creation, and the world is a help and not a hindrance bestowed by God in His Grace, for man to work out his deliverance, so that the unknowable anma may draw nigh, towards the knowable. That is the function of Grace or God's Energy.

The basic concept of Saiva Siddhanta that Love is God implies anma's love towards God and fellowmen. All actions of man are either "Hitham or Ahitham" – That which works in accord with God's will is "Ahitam". Modern man sees in this concept of universal Good, the outcome of individual conduct and peace and harmony are assured. If one is right with God, one is right with his fellowman. In our world of oppressive discords and emergency situations, there seems an urgency to establish the God who is Love, in our hearts and minds. The Saiva Siddhanta concept of Truth as Love is the concept of non-difference, to be united in the deepest essence of love.

Yes - It is a leap from the unreal to the Real.

This doctrine needs our constant revivification. An immersion in the waters of Grace that lapped the shores of St. Appar's revelations will fortify our insight to take the leap. In his famous Canto on "Manifestation of Siva's Power", (Tirumurai VI. 94. 1-10) the man of God recalls the objects existing in intimate relation to the Cit-Sakti of Siva and thereby possessing indisputable potency.

Appar the elderly father of toiling Saivites, recounts his experience of the potency of the whole world as the play of the Energy of Siva (Cit-Sakti) or the immanent power of Siva. "He permeates the earth, sun, moon, ether, firmament, fire, water, and the life-force; male, female, forms diverse, yesterday, today and tomorrow; first and last, things precious, towering mountains, seeing eyes, words and numbers, rivers, innumerable stars, grass, shrub and weeds; He, Siva Supreme, moves the oceans, the forces of death, the trees and deities, the directions; He is beauty, glory, fame and plenty as well as ugliness, want, strife, failure and fears. He indeed is the Vedas, the Mantras and the Sciences, the ancient and the new, the height and depth, music and discord, light and sound, unity and diversity, the possible and the impossible.

Thus, doth His Feet pervade the whole universe of “being”. We witness in these utterances a sense of awe, fear as well as being attracted in love, to the presence of power. In the nuances of fear, reverence, humility, adoration, and apprehension confronted with the presence of power, man experiences awe and love. It is a mystical relation between the “Owner and Owned”.

It is this ambivalent nature of awe and amazement, as well as attraction and love which turns man towards the presence of Power, and the subjective assurance of this Presence of Power by the realised saints has helped to stabilize the religious philosophy of Siva Siddhanta today.

The Saiva Saints venerated in their soul-stirring canticle of praise, the three, phases of the Power of Siva, Iccha Sakti-Love, Kriya Sakti-will to serve, and Jnana Sakti - knowledge, and thereby reflected the full potency of Grace of Siva. This is the secret of their appeal among the different strata of seekers of Truth.

However, its utilization has not been made comprehensible, as the potency experienced by them in an intimate relationship has not been renewed in the spiritual life of the Saivites of today. When the experience of Power, in any one of the three phases outlined above is not renewed, the consequence of the experiences too is not felt dynamically.

The advocates of Saiva Siddhantam today are so engrossed in analytic dissertations of the eternal entities, and of their inter-relational points of intersection, that they have missed the trees for the wood. The “Accomplished End” is not static but needs to be renewed in the spiritual life of the Saivites today. The presence of Grace is one of the perpetual renewals.

St. Sambandar invoked the inherent power ingrained in the ‘Holy Ash’ received by him at the Madura Temple of Meenakshi Ambal, where he worshipped, before proceeding on his mission to the kun-Pandyas Palace. In the presence of royalty and before the Jain hierarchy, his veneration of the “Neeru” or “Holy Ash” as the reservoir of Siva’s Power Worked, as he sang the ten stanzas. God’s own language makes itself heard, when Siva’s power is experienced. In response, God’s grace stands revealed. He effected the cure of the Pandyan king from his painful illness. In an emergency situation was evoked the stanzas ten by us, but the numinous lines failed to ignite in this instance. That was because of the obscuring nature of the soul’s power to link with the potency of the “Holy Ash”, equated with the power of Siva.

Not yet in unison!

The Anma is not yet in unison with the Power of Siva-Sakti. The eye, the light of the Sun and the Souls apperceptive power must integrate to enable the eye to see. That is the function of Grace. That the power of Grace is the vital link with the power of action, is the indomitable truth of Saiva Siddhantam. The Divine Will moves behind, beneath, over and above, under and below every atom and act. Where man’s will is not conjoined with God’s Will, the potency is weakened. It is low tide but the ebb does not deny the reality of tide nor that of the sea!

The perpetual Presence of the Divine Power is an established truth of Saivism. Its manifestation in varying degrees of potency is the mystery of religion. Saiva Siddhantam mediates through the communication of the “Tirumurai” Seers, and the philosophers and Preceptors, the Essence of the Indwelling inseparable Power of Siva in the microcosm and the

macrocosm, as well as its applications, utilization and experience of it in an infinite variety of ways, with a clarity, lucidity and veracity unknown in any other systems of Philosophy.

4. INSIGHT INTO DIVINE GRACE

Let us now penetrate with the glow of Mother's Grace into the utilization and experience of the crescendo of the full potency of Grace, by the founder of popular Saivism, St. Tirujnana Sambandam in the seventh century A.D,

Saivism was at its lowest ebb at the beginning of the century, with alien faiths holding sway and the child saint's advent marked Saivism's high tide, in what can be described as one of the astounding phenomena in the History of the world, for effecting the decisive extermination of two of the major religions, Jainism and Buddhism from the life and culture of South India.

The worship of Siva, the philosophy of Saiva Siddhantam propounded by St. Sambandar implicitly, and his unimpeachable testament of the Reality of Saivism constitute a significant landmark and is fraught with meaning so profound, that any research or revaluation of the Siddhanta way of life must take into fullest consideration, his pre-eminence as the exalted witness of Saivism in Essence and Manifestation for all times.

It is well known that most of the studies in Saiva Siddhanta during the last two centuries, have been focused on the "Meikanda-Sastras" - the philosophical Treatises, fourteen in number, ably expounded by St. Meikanda Deva and his illustrious successors from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. Our contention is that the authentic expressions of Saivism, communicated to posterity in the "Tirumurais-Twelve", by seers who directly experienced the power and light of Divine Grace, and who vibrated to the wave length of an indissoluble Siva-Sambandam, the crucial touchstone of Saivism and its Philosophy, should be given First Consideration in any scholastic or popular study of the subject of Siva. The horizontal dimension of the foundation should be apprehended before taking up the vertical structure of Saivism. Eventually the prologue and the epilogue will integrate into an accomplished Edifice, and the Effulgence of the Transcendent-Immanent Sivam will beam from every possible approach.

Let us now take up the refrain intoned by
St. Sambandar.

Who gave you the Milk?

The orthodox father of the three-year-old child, Sivapada Hrydayar, of the priestly class of brahmins at Seerkazhi questioned his son. as he saw the traces of milk in his chin, when he returned from a purificatory bath in the sacred tank of Braham-Teertha in the vicinity of the Temple of Brahmapuram.

The child's answer gives a master clue to one of the fundamental approaches to Saiva-Siddhantam "Pemman Ivan Antre" - "This is He, the sovereign Lord". The uplifted stick of the father drops down; the rebuke vanishes into amazement, as the child elaborates in ten stanzas on the resurgence of Divine Grace permeating his innocent self from within and without.

This is the opening canto of the First Tirumurai, the genesis of Saiva-Siddhantam the Final View of Reality. In this canto, the Poet-Seer reveals the vision of Siva in indissoluble union with Sakti on the left side wearing an earring riding on a bull, clad in tiger skin, with

flouring locks of knotty hair, on which shines the crescent moon, and whose forehead gleams with the holy Ash, a symbol of the all-consuming nature of Siva's cosmic activity of dissolution.

Personal Experience-Anubhava

The approach to the Absolute Reality by personal revelation is invested with validity, in the context of a three years old communicating the vision of Grace-excelsis, in language and content, which defy analysis. Besides, the awe-struck father sees in the child's awakening knowledge of the Real, the over powering impact of Grace at work. The Reality of the Pathi, the Supreme Overlord, the reality of the divine Grace that has operated on the child, the inseparable Link so immediate and intimate between the Siva-Sakti and the child's Anma-Sakti, implied in the act of sipping the mother's milk validate the Reality of the Anma. Further the even-impeding, primal limitations that threaten the anma, evidenced by the stick of Pasa, wielded by the father-Sivapada Hrydayar, affirm the reality of the Bonds. In this incident we see Saiva Siddhanta in a nutshell, in Essence and Experience.

The first song of the Thirumurais Twelve

Gone are the effect of deeds and the oppressive snares of the delusive world. Gone too is the assertive egoity. We see the awakened child praising Siva and the glory of His Grace, suffused with the non-dual knowledge of Sivam. Sivajnanam's vibration is what we hear in his first song of liberation:

“Ear-beringed, He rideth on the bull,
His head adorned with the gleaming crescent moon.
Besmeared with the ash from the cremation ground.
He is the thief who steals away my heart.
Enthroned on the lotus bloom, Brahma offered
His meek worship and grace obtained.
This is He, the sovereign Lord of Brahmapura”.

- Tirumurai I.I.

The words, “This is He”, begin the phase of dynamic Saivism as a living way of life for the masses, with its appeal to realise the goal of human existence. St. Sambandar personalizes the transcendent Siva, Formless and yet assuming the Form of Grace, to vouchsafe grace to His devotees. Siva reveals as “the stealer of hearts”, “He who has taken his abiding abode in the core of his being”.

The cry of the child is the signal for the advent of the Divine Mother of Grace. From her veiling obscurity, at the right moment, she reveals Her “Anugraha”, the power of Siva is in inseparable union with “Him -Pemman”, the supreme one, who is the agent of dissolution. He dances on the world's cremation ground, and smears the ashes on His body, to denote the power of resolving what has been dissolved. The vehicle of the bull typifies ‘Dharma’ or righteous living, as the basic step of creation, with the Creator, Brahma offering worship. The crescent indicates that the Lord protected and conserved the moon from annihilation, while His besmeared body with the ash of the world's crematorium reveals His Absolute Being, as the Efficient Cause of the universe. That the Lord of the Cosmic operation is also the Immanent

Lord, Who indwells, concealed in man's core of the heart, is referred as the "Stealer of Hearts". In this Songs of songs.

The Unseen Ray of Light

It is remarkable, that the salient features of Saivism are delineated so vividly, mainly by symbols and puranic references, which make them concrete and subjective. The Saivites consider such images of Siva as Forms of His Grace. Siva's Grace and wisdom (Jnana) are indivisible from Him. Therefore, His Form described by poetic seers is spiritual in essence. In the words of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, "any great symbol becomes all things to all man; age after age, it yields to men such treasure as they find in their own hearts".

It is to be remembered that for long, Saiva Siddhantam as a way of life centering round the relationships so indivisible of Pati with Pasu, and Pasu with Pati and Pasam, has been relegated to the background in Indian Thought and Philosophy, because of its symbolic language.

The wave length of Symbology

The time now is ripe to interpret and revivify the language of symbols and signs, so that the value norms of Saivism can be presented in its proper stature. The nectarine wisdom was clothed in the language, shrouded with mystery, as a safeguard against opposing forces of alien creeds and cultures.

Now the process of understanding the symbolic language has begun to throw fresh light on the canonical Texts, so that the "Tirumurais" are no longer closed treasures; that recurring imagery and symbols and puranic lore occur with definite structure and thought patterns to express the inexpressible potency of Siva, can be discerned in the following canton of St. Pattinattar of later age, which bears similar imagery to that used by St. Sambandar;

Oh Siva, My God!!

"Is it to establish the fact", "I am the knowledge of the pure path", that you adorn yourself with the pure moon on the top of your matlock? Is it to remember that virtue excels and truth all-powerful, that you ride on the bull? Is it to vindicate the ground of being, the basis of existence, that you stand as 'He, She, It? What conspiracy is it, that you should confound those who know you not, as being so near to them. The mind is your abode and yet, what stealth it is that you elude the grasp of human beings". Tiruottiyur Orupa Orupatu.

Thus, we see that symbols, imagery and puranic lore derive their meaning from the need to mediate the Great unknowable to finite comprehension. The reference to Lingodhbhava Murti, and Brahma and Mal in search of the crown and feet of the pillar of fire, gave rise to the symbol of the great Linga. The word Kuri-meaning the "Purposeful Symbol" is used in this context by St. Sundarar in VII. 24.9.

"Oh, symbol worshipped by Mal and Brahma".

Beyond the Frontiers of Time and Space

This is only a first step in exploring the “Golden orb of Truth”, that is Saivism, from the point of view of Revelatory Experience, as gleaned in the Saiva Canonical Literature. For does not the very term Sidd-Antam connote indisputably the end realised by the Siddhas or the realised seers? Their final view encompasses not only the accomplished end contained in the twelfth sutras of Sivajnana Botham, but also their sadhana-practices spiritual, the means pursued by them at each of the developmental stages, from bondage to liberation, from separation and aptness, to inseparable communion in non-dual union, and above all their profound awareness and intuitive apprehension and experiences of the Indwelling Power of Grace.

A study of the mythology and mystical background lore of Saivism will certainly open new Pathways to the unexplored terrain of the Mother-Sakti, the causal Power of Siva. Her expanding frontiers baffle many a researcher of Saivism, but curiously enough, the mystic and puranic love of the “Sacred Hymns of the Saiva Saints” are within of ambit of understanding of the popular masses, who imbibe strength and Love from the Devarams which tap their inner resources and love of personalism and concretization and makes Siva a living presence.

We end where we began.
“Who gave you the milk?” My Son?
“This is He” - Oh father.

To experience the positive. Actualization in the Ever-Present now is to increase our own awareness of the Goal of consummate union with His Feet. This indeed is the highest spiritual Gain of Saiva-Siddhanta, as a way of life, the way to the Real. This Pathway does not preclude science and its discoveries. It is the play of inter-relationships of the cosmic forces in unison with the knowledge of the Real vibrating in the Anma-all massive vibrations generating power infinite. It is behind the latest discovery of converting the wave energy into electric power as well as behind the power to transform inner lives.

5. CHIT-ANTAM AND VALUE EXPERIENCES

The graceful fulfilment, what is commonly termed the accomplished End of Saiva Siddhanta follows from an unqualified affirmation of the criterion of value-Experience. The most reliable testimony embodying this value of Truth itself (chit-antam) and its self-revelation in intuitive Experience has been attested in the integrated experience of the Sixty-Four Saiva Saints. In the Magnum Opus called ‘Periya Puranam’, the fragrance of the manifestation of Siva the Supreme Reality, is wafted in their lives and dedicated work. Their perfumed hymns on Saiva in His manifested forms embody both the Essence and Revelation.

Their insight depends on a natural illumination that originates from Him who is Truth. The Saiva Siddhanta conception of Revelation is best apprehended in the perspective of illumination. Siva is the Luminous Sat., and is the source of all knowledge. The intuitions of these seers of Siva, like Tirumular, Sambandar and Manicavasagar provide the norm for all spiritual effort. In their soulful Devarams, they point at the false and make possible its removal, and focus man’s quest on the Real.

“Punthi vattattil puhundu nintranai poyenbebo?
Will I ever doubt the Reality of Him,
Who abides in the core of my Intelligence?”.

queries St. Appar, and declares in words that can move the seven heavens, his unutterable love for the Lord.

We can merely record the meaning, but it is important to learn to interpret St. Appar’s revelation, in order to apprehend the Saiva concept of faith as “Mahabhava”. It is the result of desire lessness to things of the senses, in consequence of the anima’s awakening knowledge, and what predisposes it to meditation and the sequential integral union with Grace. That is the experience of the freed anima, which cuts across all barriers of age, sex, birth, caste, and deeds good and bad.

Sings St. Appar:

“The Indweller who impels my tongue and mind,
Who tunes my thought and brings to fruition;
The Pure One who rides on the white bull,
Who dons the crescent on His braided locks,
Who follows me, my Mother, Essence of tapas,
Unknown to the Overlords who sway o’er deities,
He is Siva, the Lord of Alavay by whose Grace,
This humble self is activated to meditate.”

Such has been the revelations of Grace to highly sensitive devotees of the Lord, like the Saiva mystic seers.

The Mahabhava rests on meditation. It may be asked Meditate on what? Meditate on.

The Letter Five

That shall ensure the integral union of anma with the ‘Tiruvadi’ or the Feet of Siva, signifying His Grace. The sense of belonging to His Feet connotes the intense awareness of the anma towards Siva, and not merely an attitude of trust towards God. The peculiar stress so unique to Saiva Siddhanta, is this attitude of will be impregnated with cognitive force. St. Appar’s faith becomes integrated with Siva’s grace or what is known as Tiruvadi. St. Manicavasagar too affirms this “Pavam” - (bhava), the true occurrence of grace. “No other truth there is, than to BE THINE” Tiruvacagam 5.81.

Now, we shall focus our attention on the interpretation of the Saiva Siddhanta concept of God as the Transcendental One, while affirming His non-dual relationship with the world of phenomena, and also the relation between the anma and Siva in the state of liberation.

The Vedic revelation finds its authentic representation in the “Saivagamas”, which attempt to rediscover the Truth of the eternal verities of Pati, Pasu and Pasam, within the Veda and its tradition. The unique feature of Suddha Advaita is that the communion of anma with Siva is affected by the Grace of God, and at the initiative of the anma. That God is at once the content of faith and also what can cause such faith, is the context of the first aphorism of Sivajnana Botham. That God is the Immanent - Transcendent being is realized by St. Thayumanavar, and revealed by him in his Hymn of Adoration to Siva:

“He is the thought of all thinking
within the mind. Immanent, undifferent;
Being with all loving blended, the life of life;
Passion nor parts possessing;
Seen of love; Bliss to beloved ones imparted;
Pure spring of the nectar of Heaven;
Evil-less, over all, sole Supreme one;
Light of Siddhanta; Him let us adore”. III. 15.

The supreme Siva being one with the anma, immanent yet different from them, abides in. inseparable union with his creative Energy - “Aanai of Siva” popularly known as Sakti, which impels the anma to experience “going and coming”, due to the false and good deeds performed by man through his mind, thought and body. In the terminology of Saiva Siddhanta, it is the inter-penetration of the anma’s Iccha, Jnana and Kriya by the Iccha, Jnana and Kriya of Sakti in Siva.

“Hail Him as Truth and Love
Refreshing sweetness of Mercy
Hail that are manifested in all forms
Hail the ever-fresh, surging waters of Mercy”.
- Tiruvacagam. 5.7.63.

The Siddhantin advocates the decisive entity of the anma and expounds the nature of its existence. The anma exists and is encased in the body composed of Primordial matter. Further, the anma, is not the body, not the senses, and not the prana. The anma which is intelligence is different from all the above material organisms. There is something which suppressing the senses and releasing the senses, causes the absence or presence of feeling: That something is the anma.

Tayumanavar delineates it in poetic imagery:

“In darkness and impure
Long have I ignorant remained,
Till Thou enkindled'st wisdom's fire,
In fusing heat refining me,
Till tempered, and touched by grace,
The Soul's transforming alchemy,
I become God's purest gold.
Thine own, thy willing slave to be.
Oh Lord, for such transfiguring love,
What shall I render unto thee?
..... O Thou Who are the only First
For evermore Siddhanta's goal”.

- St. Tayumanavar. IV. 32

The Knowledge of The Anma

We shall examine critically the relationship of the anma with its inner perceptions - Manas, Buddhi, Cittam and Ahankaram. “Though it is not one of the four mental faculties, yet it is closely associated with them, and other evolutes of Maya like a king with his ministers”. S. J. B. IV.

It passes through the five phases of consciousness namely, waking, dream, deep sleep, turiya, turiyatita - also termed respectively as self-consciousness (jagrat), dream consciousness (Swapna), sub-consciousness (Sushupti), super-consciousness (Turiya), and subliminal or transcendental consciousness (Turiyatita).

The anma's consciousness is dependent upon God who is in union with the anma. It does not know itself or God. Pasutva is the anma's nature when involved in Pasam, that is, finite experience in association with the evolutes of matter. Sivatva is anma's nature when illumined by God's Grace, with the knowledge of its advaita relationship with absolute spiritual reality.

It is the Saivite teaching that the anma is at first in a condition of inaction, and that God gives it the initial impetus to action. He gives knowledge to the anma by means of the senses, perceptions, the luminaries, time, Karma and bodies etc. in as much as the anma in its Kevala state is formless and non-intelligent. The anma's primal condition of obscurity is like that of copper covered with dross. The attribution of the anma's acts after God - realization is the logical outcome of the doctrine that God is the all - mover.

“No atom moveth but by His motion”.

The Siddhantin's remarkable study of the anma emphasises the wisdom of self-obliteration; In the spirit of complete self-forgetting, the anma is given to praise the majesty and the grandeur of Siva, the Supreme One. The sequence to this line of thought so frequent, as a reiterated fundamental in the Saiva Siddhanta Texts, is a stage of spiritual discrimination when self-effacement is so complete, that St. Sambandar alludes to the Lord as “the crafty one concealed within the recesses of the anma, and moving it to deeds”. St. Manicavasagar alludes

to the wonder of His Grace, radiating his anma and in complete self-surrender sings the song of love serene.

“Thou are my all - my fluent tongue
My organs of thought, perceptions subtle,
My comfort Thou and trepidation too,
My power for good and ill beside;
No other goal have I in life. Truly in adoring Thee,
Lies the way to liberation. In my fearful moments,
Oh Sivaloka, will Thou not be my solace?” 33.5.

The impact of the power of Grace on the anma’s innate consciousness is of the Essence of Saiva Siddhantam, and a full apprehension of it is portrayed by the Saiva Seers as direct experience, and immediate intuition:

“With his grace alone, his feet worshipping.”
- St. Manicavasagar.

“Grace alone rules the world. Grace alone
illuminates the shadows of birth.”
- Karaikal Ammayar.

“By Grace alone did my Lord Nandi,
Enter the core of my being,”
- Tirumantram.

“He bade me see all with eye of Grace;
As unwittingly, I strove with other eyes to see.”
- Tayumanavar.

The Letters Five

The utterances of our saints are the valid investigations of spiritual truths, and their experiences testify to the efficacy of the ‘sadhana’ of spiritual effort in the ceaseless repetition of the Lord’s name - The Letters Five - to invoke His Grace - Tami Arul. It is the spiritual practice par excelsis evolved by the anma in its association with the Anta -karanas - which are the four inner mental faculties.

The Pranava

The antakaranas are chitta, mind-stuff, manas, the vibrations therein caused by the impact of external objects conveyed through the organs of senses, Buddhi, the reaction following the vibration, the determinative faculty and Ahankara, the idea of “I” that flashes with the reaction, I-making faculty. When there is no vibration (*i.e.*, thought) in the mind stuff, deep sleep supervenes in ordinary mortals, in all have the jnanis. The soul is pure Intelligence which by the help of organs of action, senses and internal organs, is able to know external objects and experiences, pains and pleasures and stands apart as witness of all these experiences in waking state, in dream, in deep sleep and the two further states of Turiya and Turiyatitam.

The letter 'A' is the symbol of Ahankara. It is one of the faculties of perception. Buddhi gives rise to Ahankara which is the seed of 'I'-ness in man, the obsession of 'I'.

A causes *Ahankara* to function.
U is that of *Buddhi*.
M is that of *Manas*.
Bindu causes *Cittam* to function.
Natham which is inseparable from.

All these letters form the symbol of the anma. These five letters constitute the Pranava, Consciousness arises when anma and 'antakarana' meet, just as the tides rise and fall during the conjunction of the sun and moon.

We shall at this point consider the philosophical import of the "Letters Five" - Panchaksara, the symbolic name of Siva, in their association with the anma and the faculties of perception. Chittam takes an impression presented by the senses, and considers what it is. It cannot know that it so considers. Manas takes such impressions and doubts whether it is or is not this or that. Ahankara asserts that the impression is such and such. Buddhi determines properly. It is the faculty of reason, involving the sense of agreement and difference. The significance of Sutras four and five of Sivajnana Botham lies in the implied affirmation that the anma is of the form of Panchaksara or Letters Five which is synonymous with,

PRANAVA

A - Ahankara - Origin - Brahma
U - Buddhi - Preservation - Visnu
M - Manas - Samhara - Rudra
AUM - Bindu - Natham - Isvara, Sadasivam.

Tirumular reflects on this mode of approach of the Sivaagamas with its integrated spectrum, comprising sections on devotion (carya), ritual (kriya pada), meditation (yoga pada) and gnosis (jnana pada). The inter-relation of the three principal concepts of the Agama, namely, Bindu, Sakti and Siva, is lucidly described in the famous Tirumantram, oft quoted, but misunderstood for the most part:

"The ignorant ascribe that Love (infused Anma) and Sivam are two
None know that Love (infused Anma) art Sivam,
When they know that Love is Sivam,
They shall repose in the Love of Sivam,"

Siddhanta teaches that the gift of God's power transforms the soul into radiant love. The mere exercise of "The Letters Five", as a religious practice is meaningless. It becomes efficacious only when there is grace of God, and indeed the Grace of God effects the union with Siva. St. Manicavasagar exults in this exalted union.

"This day in mercy unto me, my darkness dispelled.
Thou filleth my heart as yonder morning sunrise.
Thy mode of rising I comprehend not by thought,
There being naught else but Thou, atom by atom
All things great and small change and merge

Into thy oneness, Siva, dweller in the holy Shrine.
Tho' Thou art not in this and that, yet art Thou
The essence in all-who, oh who can know Thee?"

- Tiruvacagam: 22.7.

Siva's Grace is eternally at work in man, but it is only when man's love encounters Grace, that he becomes Aware of His abiding Love. He who has experienced the Truth knows him by himself.

6. THE SADHANA PHASE

What are the means of attainment? Let us reexamine the distinct stages of unfoldment. In the presence of the Absolute Siva, everything else is non-existent. The non-real is not, and so it cannot know the real. The anma being neither real nor non-real knows both. That which perceives both is either of them. The anma is thus “satasat”, as enunciated in the Saiva Texts.

What is known as ‘Atma Darsan’ in the language of Saiva Siddhanta is that the anma learns to distinguish itself from other things, so that it can know what it really is. Knowing itself is also to distinguish itself from the Real. Then it endeavors to lift itself into the plane of the Real. This is known as the knowledge of Sivam termed Sivagnana.

St. Appar has delineated this wondrous stage of discernment of the Real by the anma, who is personified as the lady-love in quest of her beloved:

“His Name she heard; who and what He is,
She inquired; His whereabouts she asked,
She pined for Him in fervent love,
Father and mother, she forsook;
Social conventions held her not;
Self-forgetful, her name abandoned
The young maiden betook herself
To the Feet of Her Beloved.”

The Advent of the Guru

Transfixed with love, St. Manicavasagar lifts himself to the plane of the Real in this hymn and unfolds the essence of sutra eight of S. J. B. by vividly portraying his experience of the encounter with Siva-Guru:

O Ambrosia that wells up and blocks
The outlets of my deluding senses five!
Show Thyself to me in Grace as Thou art -
Essence of purity. Lord Siva,
Thou who transcends all happy states without end.
My love sublime, Oh Bliss ineffable. - 22. 1

As a result of its meritorious life, the Anma encounters the Primal One, who hitherto was indirectly guiding its destiny, but who at the proper moment appears as the Guru. He illumines the anma of its enfeeblement, as having been ensnared by the wayward senses and consequent deviation from its pristine states. Thereupon the Anma gives up its erstwhile associations, and realising his inalienable stature, approaches the Feet of Haran.

The awareness of the anma’s inseparability with Siva is brought home to it by the Guru. Here again, the role of the God-Guru in the life of an earnest seeker of Truth, occupies a central theme in the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta and based on the Sivaagamas. The evaluation is based on the authority of personal revelation, the inner thread linking all revelations as the tradition of knowledge. The basis on which co-ordination of truths becomes possible is the basis of Experience. The concept of Guru plays a pre-eminent role in the religion and

philosophy of Saivism. Umapathi's Sivapragasam elucidates this phase of sadhana as the most significant in the phase of the anma's realisation of God. "By way love lies the way to the soul's weal".

The three marked stages in the process of attaining wisdom divine are as follows:

1. Knowing the true nature of the anma (anma-Dharsan),
2. Its purification (anma-suddi) and its faultless gain (anma-labha).

The first is affected by holding to wisdom, as soon as ties of bondage are cleft.

The second stage is affected by giving up egoistic efforts and trusting to Grace.

The third stage is the insight into the spiritual Experience of the Pure Being. This is the significance of "The Lord's Feet approaching" alluded in S. J. B.

Saiva Siddhanta looks upon it as Anma's intuitive knowledge of God, attained by its spiritual discipline of cariya, kriya, yoga and Jnana processes, aided by the revealing power of Grace embodied In the Guru-Preceptor, and activated by intense love of Siva. The lives of the Saiva Seers bear ample testimony to the role of the Guru in Saivism.

In the practical sadhana of repeating the thought formula of the 'Letters Five'; with intensive devotion and ceaseless remembrance, we achieve the fulfilment envisaged in the Siddhanta Sastras. Repetition of the Lord's name aids the soul's knowledge of its own self and of enjoying the gift of God's Grace. The purified consciousness of the anma which lay hidden behind the veil of thought becomes visible to itself as it appears in its own proper form, in repose. This is Anma Dharsan - the true knowledge of the anma. Then follows Siva Dharsan or knowledge of Siva, who rises in the bosom of the anma like the light of the rising sun. This is "His way of manifesting Himself as the Guru".

In Plotinus, we have reference to God-seeing and Soul-seeing.

"It will see God and itself and the All; it will not at first see itself as the "All", but being unable to find a stopping place to fix its own limits, and determine where it ceases to be itself, it will give up the attempt to distinguish itself from the Universal Being, and will arrive at the all we without change of place, abiding there where the All without change of place abiding there where the all has its abode". - Enneads 6.5.7.

Again, Plotinus elucidates further on the knowledge of anma:

"In knowing God, the spirit knows also itself, for it will know what it receives from God, what God has given to it and can give. In knowing this it will know itself, for it is one of God's gifts, or rather the sum total of them. If it cannot see Him clearly, it is because seer and seen are the same. For this reason, spirit will know and see itself, because to see is to become oneself the thing seen".

- Enn. 5.3.7

The Feet of God

Saivism lays great emphasis on the image of the Holy Feet of God. It represents the repository of divine Grace and all the Saiva saints have extolled the efficacy of the sacred Feet of Good. In sutra eight, the purified and enlightened anma arises to reach the Lord's Feet. Initiation at the Feet of the Teacher imparts great wisdom and it is initiation into the saving wisdom at the feet of the God-man, Guru, that is meant here. St. Manicavasagar refers to it in Sivapuranam: "They learn the meaning of their song beneath Thy holy Feet". St. Sundaramurthi speaks of it in, "the longing for the laying of His Feet upon my head".

Let us in this connection relate a direct experience of this Saint, to whom can be attributed the source of the "Lives of Sixty-four saints". St. Sundarar was one night sleeping outside a Siva temple at Thiruvathigai worshipped by Appar, afraid to go in because of its renown for sanctity. Siva taking the form of a mendicant lay down in the same dwelling place, and placed His Feet on Sundarar's head. 'Sir', said Sundarar rudely disturbed, "wherefore are your feet upon my head?" He received the answer, "Not knowing the direction on account of my age and where your head might be, I have done this". The saint changed his position and was sleeping again, when Siva's Feet were on his head once more. The saint asked angrily. "Who are you?" "Do you not know me?", said Siva and disappeared. There upon, Sundarar reproached himself and praised Siva in the ten stanzas which form the collection entitled "Thiruvathigai Veeratanam". Sundarar believed that the crown, men set upon one's head did not make one a king, but kingship was his on whose head the king of kings laid His Lotus Feet.

"The young boy (Markandeya) refuge sought from Death}
To save him, Thou grim Death (Yama) did slay.
Such deeds Thy might accomplished;
And I who have known all Thy acts of Grace
Now plead, O Father should dread Yama press
On me, forbid him. Say, "he's" my bondsman.
Thou who in green Pungur abides.
By meditation has my being sought Thy Feet."
- St. Sundarar.

Thus, when Grace is manifested, then thoughts of "I and mine" cease to be and the stage of initiation is Tiruvadi (the Holy Feet); Tirumular in his classic work 'Tirumantram' refers to the feet in various contexts, as manifesting the manifold Power of Grace:

"Learning at the Feet of God
Godlike maketh mortal me;
Learning at the Feet of God,
Granteth heaven my boon to be;
Learning at the Feet of God,
Bonds unbindeth, maketh free;
Learning at the Feet of God,
Powers bestoweth victory." - Tirumantram, 1598.

The most cardinal tenet of Siddhanta Saivam is to realise the Absolute Being in pure immediacy and that is the goal of every saivite. Sat is Intuition itself. It implies that Sat is the being unknowable to knowing but is accessible to the experience of intuition, through non-dual union with Grace which is inalienable with the Absolute.

“The Lord who cannot be apprehended by finite knowledge or sense perception, must be contemplated by spiritual Insight (Jnanakan). At that stage, the association with the finite is eliminated, as the vanishing of a mirage. The Lord is the Tree of life, spreading the coolness of its refreshing shade. Meditate on the letters Five as enjoined”. - S. J. B. IX

Tiruvacagam expounds the manner in which the knowledge of Siva is bestowed by his Grace, and how this experience is conserved. It records the discovery of the efficacious remedy to free oneself from all ailments, and to remember the Power as Siva in unforgettable awareness, and extolling his glory. Therefore, chant the letters Five and realise the efficacy of the Lord’s Name. Sing Namasivaya and be free from the tribulation of life, which is the result of one’s separation from the Supreme Giver of Life and Grace.

This is the true purport of St. Manicavasagar’s supplication:

“If I remember Thy name oft and anon.
Will any kind of impediment oppress me”.

“The raft of the Five Letters, I cling to -
Support me and take me to the shore”.

- Tiruvacagam.

Empirical consciousness gives place to super-consciousness, which is alive to the reality of Grace immanent in it. The contemplation of Namasivaya consists of non-dual intuition of Siva, through inward union with Grace. The injunction referred in sutra nine, is to chant the Name with I-ness surrendered, because the self that intuitively Being is as much itself, as it is also being.

“Ariyum Arive Sivamumam”. - S. J. B. 6.2.5.

Siva’s Name in Siva’s language makes itself heard in the Letters Five, when Grace is experienced. It is on such precious experiences of Siva, understood as personal Revelation, that the metaphysics of Saiva Siddhanta is based. Namasivaya is the gateway to the experience of intuitive life in Siva.

The importance of sadhana in spiritual life has been the constant refrain of St. Manicavasagar in Tiruvacagam. The certitude of Saiva’s Love has been attested in the exalted yet practical life of all realised Siva seers, but in none so movingly and implicitly as in St. Manicavasagar. How does Manicavasagar preserve the unction of Grace bestowed on him by the Siva-Guru at Perunturai?

“Namasivaya - word of God Eternal!
Gracious Feet that quits not my heart
Even for a split second - All Hail”

- Sivapuranam, 1. 1.

The poet-Seer contemplates on the ephemeral nature of the world and of the embodied life of men. In such contemplation, the self becomes aware of the immanence of the true Being

within and without. The fruit of meditation is to remain in steadfast knowledge of Pati or the Lord Supreme.

Tiruvarutpayan or The Fruit of Divine Grace, in Chapter VI poses the question:

“How do we understand the Reality of Pati? The answer is provided in Sutra IX of S. J. B. which enjoins the remembrance of the Letters Five”. Siva’s emancipating energy (Grace) works, so that the anma experiences the effects of the Deeds; Deeds done; Fruits, the joys and sorrows of embodiment; and knows Siva who brings the deeds home to the anma. It is ignorance of these four factors that leads man to self-assertiveness and delusion. In the midst of anma’s thought, the light of wisdom set up by Grace must shine. The anma is unintelligent without Siva. Inquire not; Doubt not of Grace, but regard steadfastly the loving wisdom that indwells within you. Ponder ceaselessly on the Name of Siva and lie hidden in His shade.

The name of Siva reverberates in the song of self-surrender of St. Manicavasagar in the Tirucadagam Ode:

“My gift of thought is offered to thy thought domain of thought.
Myself, lowliest of the low,
Thy luminous gracious Form, I see m aught.
Mv eyes take lustre in Thine.
My acts blossom as worship at Thy beauteous Feet.
The spoken word of mine
Hollowed it be, as the pledge of Thy word.
Well-tuned are the senses five
To enjoy Thy symphony. Thou translumed me
Oh, Thou irresistible!
Insatiable ocean of Love! Mystic Rock of Ages.
Thine are these gifts to me
Oh! spark Eternal, whose visible Presence
Dazzles aloft
Like a dense forest of flaming red lotuses.
This solitary self
Bereft of duality seeks its repose m Thee”.

- Tiruvacagam, 5.3.26

The Quintessence of the name of Siva

‘The pledge of Thy word’ alluded in the above insight of our saint is the Word of Siva – Si Va Ya Na Ma, which mingles with “the spoken word of mine” – Namasivaya. In this symphony, Ya – the anma is at midpoint between Si and His Grace – Va. This is the discipline enjoined in the remembrance of the “Letters Five” referred in Sutra IX of S.J.B.

In this Age of Kali-yuga, the repetition of the name of Siva is advocated as the most effective sadhana for the elimination of the taint, of ‘ego’. Umapathi Sivacarya, one of the outstanding exponents of Saiva Siddhantam, declares that all Agamas and Vedas and scriptural texts have as their great objective to the soul’s enlightenment, the incantation of the Letters Five - the mystic formula of Siva’s name. He states in the ‘Tiruvarutpayan’ - The fruit of Divine Grace - in answer to the question by a seeker,

“What does the pentad of letters declare?”,

that the Lord, his energy (Grace) the Bond, the evolutes of matter (maya) and the Anma are embodied in the sound of Omkaram. The mystic mantra Aum, also known as Pranavam, contains within it

The Absolute Siva, the divine energy - Grace,
The knowledge of inherent impurity.
The material substance and the ANMA.

The essence of the name of Siva must be fully understood, before one meditates on it.

Si - stands for Siva
Va - for revealing Grace - His anugraha sakti
Ya - for the anma
Na - for turodana-sakthi (the veiling Grace)
Ma - for the root impurity of mala.

It is like the sun, its rays, the eye, the light and darkness It leads a seeker from the fettered state to that of Moksha.

A meaningful contemplation of this thought-formula, also termed as Panchaksara, is an inner worship of the anma, according to St. Arulnandi Sivacharya, author of Sivajnana Siddhiar. There are different ways of chanting this mantra, according to the stage of the anma's development, and the proper arrangements suited to each one's spiritual level must be learned from the Guru.

There is sthula Panchaksara -
Na ma Si va ya - Siva is in the centre.
There is the sukshma Panchaksara -
Si va ya na ma - Soul is in the centre.
There is the karana Panchaksara -
Si va ya si - Here mala and tirodhana are eliminated.
There is the Maha karana Panchaksara -
Si va - Siva with Grace.
There is the Mukti Panchaksara -
Si - Siva alone is contemplated.

What is of significance is that such practice effected in the enjoined manner, under the guidance of the Guru and in a mature state of purification of the anma, leads man indubitably to the attainment of the goal.

The Siddhantin avers that even in the emancipated state, the potentiality of corruption remains, as Pasam is eternal. Tiruvarutpayan 75 states, “When the anma set free from the influence of three-fold defilement, through the Grace of Siva, obtains divine Wisdom, and so rises to live in the conscious enjoyment of Siva's presence, in conclusive bliss, this is emancipation”.

The liberated seers discerned in the word that was in the beginning, the word that was Siva, a powerful form of revelation. The word owes its potency to precise recitation, to

rhythmical sequence, and in this manner did the ancient Vedic Seers approach their modes of worship by pronouncing the luminous primeval sound 'Aum'. Power operates only upon power. The potency of the human will require the Divine will to consummate the rapture of the incantation of 'Aum Sivaya na ma'. The power of the Word devoid of the structure of will is not effective self-surrender, and becomes a monologue devoid of grace.

The liberated seers discerned in the Word that was in the beginning, the Word.

The continual chanting of the 'Letters Five' is a fulfilment of the external ritual of worship imperceptibly leading to the internal worship. Spiritual discipline is effective when it harnesses our thought, word and action, body, wealth and spirit towards the realisation of the goal. The 'Letters Five' takes the form of meditation (bhavana), incantation (mantra) and action (Kriya). It involves the mind, feeling and will and all are exercised in it. We think the object of meditation; we feel the emotion; and resolve to renew our surrender to Siva in an act of will.

Thus, having set Siva in the lotus heart in meditation of the Five Letters, the anma sees Him. He is seen as knowledge, the inner principle of the anma's consciousness. Here the anma loses its self-dependance and becomes dependent on Siva -bondsman true-Adimai, just as iron in fire loses its hardness and becomes like the fire.

"Did I merit much bequest of Grace?
The gift of Sivayanama, from Thee was mine".

The Concealing Grace of Siva

God in His infinite grace has bestowed on the anma, the psyche-physical organism and other aids, and endowed it with successive birth and death, as well as subjected it to the inexorable moral and natural laws; so that it is equipped to combat against the limitations caused by self-love and self-assertion. The divine impulse and guidance extended to the an, a in its state of bondage is connoted by the syllable Na. This impulse works in the direction of the limiting principle of anavam, with the object of annihilating it eventually. Therefore, it is called Tirodana Sakthi or veiling power. It awakens the anma from its inactive state caused by the egoistic principle, and projects it to the world without its being aware of the inner Presence of Siva. Tirokanam is the concealing phase of the divine grace which is signified by the syllable, Va.

Tirodana Sakti works through the positive entity known as Maya. It is the unseen substratum, behind the seen universe, the substantial cause of the objective world. It is all-pervading, imperceptible, material energy capable of taking on varied manifest forms, both subtle and gross at the will of God. Maya's manifested forms known as mayayam are classified into Tanu-body, Karanam-organ, Bhuvanam-sphere of existence, and Bhogam-object of the world experienced.

The anma, in its successive births is subject, to the dual force of the anavam on one side, and the divine impulse or Tirodanam on the other, and hence faces the conflicting forces of nature and matter. These responses are either good or evil and determine the future embodiments and its environs. This is explained as the theory of Karma (Vinai) or moral law. Thus, the anma is enmeshed in the limitations of anavam, maya, tirodanam and Karma.

The defilement known as anavam, that which limits the self to minuteness, is denoted by ma in the Letters Five. All others form the remedial group and are collectively represented by 'na'. The anma denoted by Ya is subject to the impact of these kinds of bonds, and suffers from the stupefying effects of the opposites, like birth and death, forgetfulness and awareness, and sleep and wakefulness.

It will thus be seen that Na, Ma, on the one side of Ya signify the divine guidance in darkness operating on the anma, in its state of bondage. In the phenomenal universe, the impulse of Tirodanam signified by Na is recognised as an initiating conscious force and intention, and is the objective aspect of the Truth which scientists seek to unravel.

As a result of successive births and the resultant conflicting experiences, the anma evolves spiritually with the consequent weakening of the inherent self-love. At a certain stage in its process of evolution, the anma reaches a neutral stage where the pulls from the bonds are neutralized. Here it experiences equanimity of temper and outlook on deeds good and bad. This is known as Iruvinaiooppu.

It is in this crucial stage that the veiling power of Na transform into the revealing benign Grace - Va, which eliminates all darkness and egoism. The anma thus extricated from desire and attachment is guided by the Light of Grace. It attains super-conscious spiritual vision and is face to face with the Supreme Bliss, signified by Si -Siva, to whom the illumined, accomplished seers offer the oblation of light, and petals of love with ceaseless incantation.

The 'Panchaksara' recalls the supreme "Knowable", and exposes the impotence of ma-na, and the omniscience of Si and Va. Va is the force of Sakti and is the anma's only prop with which to realise the unity of Being - Si. The heart in the form of a lotus depicts the microcosm of the thirty-six 'tattva' which compose the world of macrocosm. The Transcendent Siva takes His abode in the lotus seat, which is symbolic of the relation in which the anma stands to it. It behooves everyone one to chant the Panchaksara according to rule, and worship Siva in the heart. Siva is best invoked in the form composed of the 'Letters Five', and the bhavana mantra and Kriya involving our mind, feeling and will produce the harmony for the purification of the anma and prepare it for the unitive life in Siva. This is known as Siva-bhoga, which is Conceived in the heart, and expressed by the tongue. It is 'Panchaksara' which constitutes the meaning and goal of life.

7. THE REVEALING POWER OF SAIVAM

The essence of the 'Letters Five', constitutes the Essence of Saiva Siddhantam and its application by the realised Saiva seers reveal the manifesting power of Saivam. The potency of the word of Siva ensures social as well as individual welfare, and recovery from famine, illness and misfortunes- In the special odes of Letters Five or 'Panchaksara' sung by the Saiva Saints, we witness the remarkable circulation of Power from man to God, and from God to man. It becomes pious meditation. The lyrics extolling the Name of Siva are invariably followed by hymns of praise as a confirmation of divine Power.

The four cantos of 'Panchaksara' sung by the illustrious Saiva Nayanmar epitomize the most moving intercourse with the Power of Siva, in absolute self-negation, elevating themselves to the potency of the one who is praised. Herein too, we witness a sacrosanct act of turning away from self-knowledge and the objective knowledge of the world, to the intuitive, direct knowledge of Siva. A perpetual, never-ceasing proclamation of His Glory and His Name is the highest offering of service by man to Siva, the Transcendent.

Saiva Siddhantam lives today in its dynamic form in these inspired cantos, known as the Sacred Tirumurais Twelve; which are in Praise of Siva, and hence the Twelve Collections embody the manifestation and expression of Siva's Power and Will. Herein, the fundamental tenets of Saiva Siddhantam are expressed in mellifluous poesy, and the absorption of an entire religious tradition in doctrine shows the heterogeneity of the material of the doctrine. The experiences of the Saiva saints articulately expressed, are again condensed in the reflection and meditation on the Letters Five-Si-Va-Ya-Na-Ma- and in the proven efficacy of the potent symbol of Siva in the Holy Ash.

Siddhanta Saivam Manifests in St. Sambandar

We shall now resort to communicate the sonorous ethos conveyed in the Panchaksara Odes of St. Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar. St. Sambandar opens the Canto thus:

'In sleeping and in waking states
Recall night and day pining in love,
Bereft of malice, the euphony of Siva's grace.
The Letters Five that defeats the awe of death'.

What is the injunction here? What is this most acclaimed of all spiritual endeavour? It is the continual chanting of the Holy Name of S:va, St. Sambandar points the Way. Impelled with love in his heart, he recalls, remembers, recites with resonance sweet, the mystic Name of Siva, not intermittently but interminably, and in active and passive states of existence, and not subject to time and space. He bids us chant the Holy Name with an immaculate purity of mind and heart cleansed of all dross and guile, and tuned to the steadfast, illumined adoration of the numinous Feet of Siva, signifying the energizing and revealing power and will of the Supreme God, repository of the wisdom, grace and action of Siva.

St. Sambandar depicts, that the never forgetting, and ever remembering mystic formula- '*Namasivaya Sivayanama*' - holds the key to the domain of knowledge. Love and Power of action of Siva. The Vedas and the Agamas exclaim its potency. St. Sambandar assures us that

it is love alone that lays down the rule, and each man according to his stage of spiritual development, takes up the refrain of the Name of Siva under guidance of the Guru.

The universal and popular appeal of Saivism is demonstrated in the cosmopolitan application of the Name of Siva, to all purposes and exigencies of life, by people of varying spiritual progress. Hindus and non-Hindus, in all walks and stages of life, following different pathways in the journey to the Mount of Truth, can take up the epiphany of the Letters Five in love and purify, in light and darkness and fulfilment is assured and certified by the realized seers who have experience its potency.

St. Sambandar expands on the power of the magnetic Name of Siva in the rest of the nine hymns which we outline below:

The Letters Five communicate the quintessence of the Vedas and Agamas, the soulful vitality of the Devas, the auspicious formula of the seers who nourish the sacrificial fire. The bewildering array of sufferings wither away at the vibration of the spell of Siva's Name. The reward of a wholesome life can be conjured by the inward repetition of the sacred Name. The gentle Uma who is ever at His side, the great heroes like Ravana and Arjuna, the wielders of divine powers, jnanis, ascetics and householders, propitiate the sanctified and enlightened Name of Siva, and enjoy its invulnerability against stupendous odds, in the journey of life.

St. Sambandar sang this Decade after his formal thread-initiation ceremony (Upanayana), and surpassing the routine ritual of being initiated into the rich heritage of the scriptures, the child saint exhibits his vast store of divine knowledge in this Canto, and beckons one and all to avail of the key to the treasure dome of Siva, and enjoy the plenitude of Grace.

When he prepared to quit this earthly existence, St. Sambandar sang another moving canto on the might of the Name, *Namasivaya*, and singing it entered into the flame of Siva, and was absorbed in the contemplation of Siva. He validated that the raft of the letters Five will carry the votaries to the shore of Bliss. It is a parting message to humanity to take up the chanting of the Name of Siva, and in a way, it is also a song of fulfilment, for at the end of the canto, all those who participated in his marriage ceremony along with the immersed in the effulgence of the Lord of Nallur Perumanam. List to his moving hymn bidding all to chant the Holy Name.

“Immersed in Love with tears streaming forth,
It endows them with goodly life, who chant His Name
This is the essence of Truth in the Vedas Four,
The Lord's magnificent Name, *Namasivaya*”.

The Lord's Name is constant, though He has been acclaimed by several of His attributes as Nathan, Mamban, Nakkan, Nayanana, Nallar, Nandi, Nanju Kandan, but it is *Namasivaya* the mystic Name that spells all the virtues and the sweetness of harmony. Chant the name of the mighty wielder and bestower of Grace supernal. That is the farewell incantation of St. Sambandar.

‘Hail, Lord of Grace, Freer from the ills of life is the refrain of this poignant canto. He is the Indweller within the anma, and *Namasivaya* is the healing balm of His Grace. Veiled or Revealed, the soul clings to it as its only prop. Therefore, man is exhorted to take up the refrain

of the Name and burn up the seeds of **illusion**, and enter into the intrinsic heritage of the wisdom of Siva (*Siva-Jnana*).

St. Appar Testifies

We now proceed to interpret the canto of *Panchaksara* sung by St. Appar. He urges the Saiva fold to take up the interior chant of ‘Namasivaya’ yearningly and meaningfully:

“Hark to the Name of the Sovereign Lord with the
Crescent. It is the sure way of intuiting
His Luminous Grace in the seat of my heart;
He bides in the sacred temple at Puhalur”.

St. Appar unfolds the five-fold operation of Siva within the soul of man. The mystic formula is represented by the Dance of Siva, in the microcosm of the heart. The Truth of the Name of Siva is perceived from different angles, but all leading to the experience of the wisdom of Siva. With an unwavering conviction, St. Appar advocates all to take up the remembrance of the potent Name of Siva, and become inheritors of the terrestrial and celestial spheres. St. Appar lays much emphasis on the act of donning the Holy Ash and the act of chanting the Name as simultaneous acts of all true votaries of Siva.

“E’en from my mother’s womb and after birth too.
The remembrance of Thy Name was my sole pursuit”.
“In grace, Sivayanama repeating, I donned the Holy-Ash,
Grant me Thy beatific bliss, O Lord of Tirupathiripuliyur”.

The anma in love evokes the Love of Siva by these practices and attains the goal of Siva-jnanam. St. Sekkilar, the Author of Periyapuranam refers to the Name of Siva as the “Way of wisdom Divine”.

Saiva Siddhantam is a religion of Progress and the soul progresses through definite pathways according to its maturity and the effect of deeds, past and present. St. Sambandar views the mystic syllable and its efficacy from the steps of the ‘satputra marga’, as the child of Siva calling out the Name of the Father Absolute, who appeared before him at the age of three, and filled him with the milk of divine wisdom. St. Appar views the ‘Letters Five’ from the steps of the Dasa Marga, in the ladder of “Sariya and Kriya”. He is the faithful servitor of Siva, drawn to the over - Lord Siva by ties of servitude. So “He donned the insignia of the Holy Ash and chanted the Name of Letters Five”, and pointed the way for man to be healed of Life’s afflictions.

The Jains avenged the saint’s conversion to Saivism by fastening a granite stone round his body and throwing him into the sea. In this perilous moment, he resorted to the ‘Letters Five’ and was saved. His decade on *Panchaksara* celebrates this event, and he pours his oblation of grateful love at the Feet of Siva:

“O Lord of Scriptures, whom the Word doth help,
Celestial light of heaven. Thus, do I praise,
With hands meekly upraised, Thy golden Feet,
Tho’ they tie on me weighty stones,

And sink me in the ocean's depth, e'en then,
The Name Namasivaya will be my refuge."

"As the lotus is the best of all flowers.
And the glory of all Kine is Hara's use
Of that which they put forth. The King's glory
Lies in the unswerving directness of his deeds.
So-too, the glory of the tongue is Namasivaya."

"For men who renounce all, 'tis glory true
To wear the sacred ash. For brahmin's pure
The Vedas and Vedangas are their pride.
The Silver moon's glory is to shine serene
On the long locks of Siva, while for us
True glory rests in the name, 'Namasivaya'"

Thus, in his ten lyrics, St. Appar exclaims on the potency of the Name of Siva. This mystic word is the jewel of the tongue, the dispeller of fear, the propeller of a goodly life and expeller of sins manifold. Namasivaya is the Lamp of the inner heart and soul, and he ends the word-garland on the glorification of the fadeless Name of Siva-Namasivaya.

The Testament of St. Sundarar

St. Sundarar in his well-known canto on Namasivaya Plaintively pleads with his eternal companion Siva, that erringly he may forget Him, but not His Name, for his tongue will ceaselessly repeat the tuneful Name of Namasivaya without a split-second pause:

"Linked to naught else in life, my mind thinks
Only of Thy Holy Feet,
I'm born anew, from this time forth
I pass the way of birth no more.
In Kodumudi. Lord austere, where wise men
Thee with praises greet,
Even if I forget Thee, my tongue will utter
Adoringly Namasivaya."

7. 48. I.

St. Sundarar addresses the Lord as his great friend and lover - "Nattava, Navala, Vallava, Nambane"- Siva is the Learned, the First Cause, the Omnipotent, the Gracious One, Eternal Youth, and the fascinating One. In a testament of eternal allegiance, he assures that Siva's unforgettable Name will ever be on his lips, amidst the many vicissitudes of life.

St. Manicavasagar's Testimony

In Manicavasagar's Tiruvasagam, we find a string of pearls linked with the tear drops of love, adoring the Name of Him who made him, His Own, Siva Lord of Perunturai and Dancer at Thillai. His allegiance may be moderate, but not for an instantaneous moment would he pause in the remembrance of the Auspicious Name of Siva.

“Hail Namasivaya, Hail sacred Feet,
Hail Feet of Him who quits not my heart
Even for a twinkling of the eye “.

- Tiruvasagam I.I.

Namasivaya - The Name of distilled nectar of Grace vibrates in every line of Tiruvasagam, as this pilgrim of eternity treads the royal pathway to the Feet of Siva.

“Hail Namasivaya, I feel faint and dizzy,
Hail Namasivaya, Refuge have I none but Thee,
Hail Namasivaya, see'st Thou me so apart?
Hail Namasivaya, glory glory be to Thy Name”.

- Tiruvasagam 5.7.2.

Herein we see Manicavasagar imploring the Grace of Siva through the potency of His Name. While Umapathi Sivacharyar in ‘The Fruit of Divine Grace’ clearly enunciates the doctrine underlying the Name of Siva -the Pentad of the Letters Five and the mystic syllable *Aum* also termed *Pranava*, which is the subtle form of the Letters Five; The Saiva Saints declare the significance of the Life-Energizer, the letters Five, in and through their immediate experiences, as the manifestation of Siva’s Divine Will.

The Holy Ash

The Manifestation of yet another Symbol of Siva and His Grace is the Holy Ash. It is taken up by us for consideration, as the Sadhana of donning the Holy Ash is a unique practice among all Saivites, and its revelatory significance in Saiva Siddhantam has not been properly understood by those in the fold and outside it. The Holy Name of Siva vibrates in the microcosm and macrocosm based on the principle of the primordial “Nadam”- Sound - Energy. The Holy Ash is the ground of the creative Energy of Siva, and is established on the principle of Bindu - the germinal seed that sets in motion the five-fold operation – Panchakryta- of Siva.

The penetrating idea of “Election” becomes a central idea in Saiva Siddhantam, and is exemplified in the lives of the sixty-four Saiva Saints. “He has elected me, even me, as His chosen vassal”, is their refrain. Out of His own free and incalculable grace, Siva has chosen His devotee and also imparted to him. His seal of Grace. This is the import of donning the Holy Ash. It is His stamp of Grace. We give extracts of the cantos on Holy Ash sung by our sanctified saints, who speak the language of Siva, who don His Holy symbols and whose muted tones resound the glory of Siva. Not they, but He it is, who traverses the road of life. Siva is the actual subject of all theology. Man, merely follows after God and for this, he stands in need of revelation.

That Revelation is an act of Siva is testified in these songs full of the cadence of love:

The Potency of The Holy Ash

“Blessed are the learned.
Blessed are the Heaven -born
Blessed are the kine

May cool showers fall; May the King prosper.
Let all vicious forces perish
And Haran's name resounds everywhere.
May the earth be free from all afflictions."

The child-saint St. Tirujnanasambandar, who linked himself with the beauteous wisdom divine sang this benediction, and saved Saivism from the thralldom of the Jains and Buddhists. It is believed that the child was fed with mother's milk at the tender age of three, by Uma-Sakti of Siva. He lived during the middle part of the seventh century when the worship of Siva was at its lowest ebb in South India. When the powerful king of the Pandyan kingdom went over to the Jain religion, the good queen Consort, Mangayarkarasi who was a devotee of Siva, and her Prime Minister Kulachirayar, sent for Jnanasambandar, the upright follower of the Saiva Neri to mitigate their suffering and that of the arrogant and assertive Jain hierarchy. In response, the pilgrim-saint went alone. He worshipped at the great temple of Madurai Meenakshi Amman, and equipped with the gift of the consecrated holy ash from Her sanctum, he approached the Royal Palace. Before the august assembly of Jains surrounding the sick King, who could not be cured by them, the child of wisdom sang the efficacious canto on the glory of the "Holy Ash". He donned the healing Ash on the King's ailing body and effected a complete cure. The King, to the joy of his queen and people became a true Saivite. Such was the astonishing landmark of a total elimination of Jainism and Buddhism from South India, so complete enough to be one of the marvels of history. The famous canto is remarkable for its implicit awareness of Siva's manifesting power betokened in the symbol of the Ash.

" The canto of the Holy Ash "

1. The Ash of mystic power, donned by the devas.
 The Ash so beauteous, worthy of praise.
 The Ash extolled by Agamas, the essence of religion.
 The holy Ash is this of Madura's Lord,
 Who holds the coral lipped Uma at His side.
2. The Ash hailed in Vedas can dire ills relieve.
 The Ash of wisdom from ignorance can mitigate.
 The Ash of potency, the Real doth validate.
 The holy Ash is this of the Lord of Madura,
 Girt with luxuriant fields.
3. The Ash endows release, 'This donned by renunciates.
 The Ash of Truth, adored by perfected ones.
 The Ash of devotion, that spreads beneficence sweet.
 The Ash of fulfilment is this holy Ash,
 The insignia of the Lord of Madurai.
4. The Ash so magnetic. Yielding splendour.
 The Ash so gracious adding lustre to their mien.
 The Ash that saves from death, illumining the mind.
 The Ash so uplifting is this Holy Ash,
 The insignia of the Lord of Madurai.

5. The Ash so pleasing to wear, full of benevolence.
The Ash so excellent to extol, the wise ascetics say,
The Ash removes desires, the goal of journey's end.
The Ash so famed in lands around,
This is the Holy Ash of the Lord of Madurai.
6. The Ash betokens wealth, sorrows keep away.
The Ash of healing virtue bestows celestial joy.
The Ash so attractive donned by benefactors,
This is the Holy Ash of the Lord of Madurai
Where stately palaces gleam aloft.
7. The Ash that burnt Tripura, effective here and above.
The Ash that in usage shines, full of blessedness,
The Ash that quickens lethargy, imparting purity
This is the Holy Ash of the Lord of Madurai
Who wields the sharp and shining Trisula (weapon)
8. The Ash that gleams on Ravana, An object of contemplation.
The Ash of the form of Parasakti purges ail evil,
'Tis the essence of earth and that of philosophy too.
This is the Holy Ash of the Lord of Madurai
Who art entwined by worshipful serpents.
9. The Ash beyond the search of Vishnu and Brahma,
And Yet finely strewn on the body of the devas
It wipes the aches of life bestowing bliss.
This is the Holy Ash of the Lord of Madurai
Whose throat depicts the poison swallowed by Him.
10. Heretics with begging bowls and Sackya sects
Quiver at the sight of the Ash relished by the wise.
The bearers of the eight directions acclaim the Ash,
The insignia of the Lord of Madurai
'Tis invoked by All-mighty rulers.
11. The Ash of Alavayan, riding on the valiant bull.
So well invoked by Jnanasambandan of Seerkali.
The deadly disease of Kun-Pandya cured completely
'Tis certain that the faithful who doubt not, and
Who sing this canto will attain goodly gain.

In the Saiva canonical collections of Tirumurai, the weapons and ornaments, the vehicle, garlands and garments of Siva in His manifested forms connote a mystic significance. The Holy Ash on the forehead of Siva is one of His distinguishing traits-the mark of His Grace.

Siva is depicted with sacred ash smeared all over His body. This ash is the burnt dust of the world's Cremation Ground, and denotes that as Lord of Dissolution (samhara), He consumes in fire the universe of being and non-being; and the ash of this operation signifies His supremacy and divinity.

From the point of view of the world process of which man is an integral part, the reality of the Supreme Being is understood in terms of the world as being its end- Andam-or the cremation Ground of the dissolution. Siva viewed as the Cause of the world is His Being the Ground of the resolution of the effect. Saint Sundarar extols Siva in this aspect:

“Oh, Supreme Cause (Karana), even if I forget Thee,
My tongue will constantly chant Namasivaya (Thy Name).”

God is the universal destroyer (Sarva samhara Karta) and this insight of the Seers is based on the truth that all beings and things in the universe are subject to the general process of termination and re-emanation. In a state of total absorption, the Ground of the absorption outlives such absorption and this is conveyed in the symbol of the Holy Ash.

Saint Sambandar sang:

“He is the Lord-the thief.
He indeed stole my heart.
He abides in Brahmapuram under varied names;
When the universe with its girdle of grief
Suffers dissolution in the many deluges.
He remains imperishable.” 1. 1.

Of the cosmic functions attributed to Siva, conceived as the Cause of the world, Dissolution takes pre-eminence. Creation and conservation occur and terminate, while Samhara is continuous. Therefore, Dissolution is typical of the Absolute Being, and Holy Ash is His symbol. It typifies the liberating process and hence His insignia, par excellence.

Kadudaiya Cutalaip poti puci -1. 1.
Potiyatu meniyan -7. 4. 2.

The three horizontal lines of ‘Tirupundra’ signify the overcoming of the triple malas- 7. 64. 1. The whiteness stands for purity and the softness of the ash powdered- ‘nun poti’ of the evolutes of matter undergoing thorough extinction.

Siva, the Absolute is Immaculate and peerless, and yet the link of His Grace is subtly manifest, even in dissolution. Saint Sambandar sings “Paravanam Avathu Neeru” “The sacred Ash is the form of the Great Mother”.

St. Sundarar enjoys the subtle import of the divine Grace manifested in the Holy Ash donned by Siva, as well as His supporting Uma-Sakti on His left side, betokening His Causal Power. VII. II. 5. In his canto of praise on the Lord of Tirupuvanam, he alludes to Siva with the lovely Sakti by His side, and adorned with gleaming ash, two forms of the divine power of Grace. Siva’s chest is adorned with the sacred ash, and He embraceth the Mother, thereby He imprints His Purity on the source of Grace, while He takes on the imprint of Love and Grace from Her. Thus, Holy Ash is the imprint of the Power Absolute. 7. 84. 4.

It is a beautiful image of the mingling of Grace and Power in the One Supreme. Manivasagar’s ‘Decad on Grace’ brings out the essence of this salient mark of Siva:

“Radiant and Immaculate one!
Thy pure white Ashes shine like the lustrous diamonds
In the minds of those who think of Thee with love
Thou art Sweetness Ambrosial! - 29. 6.

The sacred ash signifies the potency of Grace and is esteemed as the spiritual manna of the Saivites- “Saivathe Sevuruvam Tiruneertan”. The form of the roseate Siva is Tirunirran-7. 82. 7. The ash of the world of matter burnt to dust refers to the final stage of involution, where the Absolute Siva stands unadulterated and pure. The Tiruneeru (ash) is the symbol of the serenity of God-head. It is also the insignia of sacrifice. St. Sambandar brings out the evanescence of the world, where everything is reduced to ashes. Nothing is permanent. The whole universe is the burning ghat and in this cremation ground, what remains is only a handful of white ashes.

“Pidditha Venneeru”
“Chudalai Podi Pusi”
Chudu Podiyaro?
Kurripahi Neerukondu anivaro” 7. 33. 1

‘Is our Lord the One who wears the ash as the insignia of His Divine purpose? With one accord make it clear,’ pleads Sundarar. 7. 333. ‘All ye who are the Lord’s ardent devotees, who praise Him unceasingly, deem to tell me, what is the grand purpose of His Holy Ash?’ Again in 7. 76. 2., he answers in the affirmative that the Lord wears the Sacred Ash for a high purpose: The concept that He dons the immaculate white ash has a profound meaning; in the next song, he reiterates that the Lord of Tiruvanjiam has never relinquished the habit of smearing his form with the white subtle dust. VII. 76. 4. The greatness of the Holy Ash has been delineated in all its implications in this canto of St. Sambandar. He demonstrates that He alone is the solace and Rock of Refuge for the world of being.

“Vantha Sambal Viraiyena pusiye
Thanthai Yarodu Thayilar”. 3. 54. 3.

He is free from attachment and the only prop of man. All created universe, the whole evolutes of Maya in gross and subtle forms are subject to dissolution, of which Siva is the Efficient Cause, and He dons the consumed Ash from which again originates Re-creation. It is the sign of Death in Life, and Life in Death. He has no father nor mother, as He is the Absolute Being, His form of Ash affirms that His Divine will shall operate in grace; and when the universe of man is reduced to its pristine essence typified in the Holy Ash, it will again resolve and dissolve, till the soul attains His Feet. It is not only the end of the cycle of being, but also the spring of beginning of the cycle.

Siva’s Insignia - The white ash, the white crescent, and the white bull stand for crystal clear knowledge, purity and dharma. Neeru-suggests the significance of the ash created on the burning embers-the symbol of the major activity of Siva - the act of involution from where His Divine Grace begins to operate.

Agastyar’s Annotation of the Canto of Holy Ash interprets it as the form of the Divine Mother. She is Siva’s Grace. Invocation to Siva through the Holy Ash signifies the expurgation of the three-elemental defilement, which give rise to the succession of births, by the grace of Parasakti, who in the beginning through the form of veiling power, and then at a later stage of

spiritual development, as Grace divine enable man to reach His Feet. The Holy Ash also implies the idea of the imperishable, an attribute of Siva, because all other things are reduced finally to the irreducible ash. Also, it is equally praised and used by the worldly to enhance their renown and riches; by the saints and sages to gain illumination of the most High, by all who seek liberation from the toil and perils of life, and the bliss of Mukti in after life, by the celestial beings, devas and asuras, as the insignia of the Grace of Siva. Holy Ash is thus the symbol that all creation will ultimately be reduced to dust, which the Supreme Siva wear in His Form. Thus, the Holy Ash affirms the ever sustaining and unfailing nature of His Grace, and one of the fundamental concepts of the manifesting powers of Siva. St Sambandar's canto of benediction showering blessing on all who take up the accord of jubilant praise of Siva's name, has a poignant reference to the Lord who revels in the perfume of the Holy Ash.

“Enthai Yaiavar evahaiyar. kollo?” III. 54. 3.

“The burnt ashes as perfume He besmears.
He has neither Father nor Mother, Himself peerless.
The effects of deeds of those who remember nought but Him,
He acquits from blemish. Our Father, What's He like?” III. 54. 3.

Thus exclaimed St. Sambandar, on the inscrutability of the Lord, whom he had seen in beauteous form with Gracious Sakti, and riding on the Bull. The finite can never fathom the infinite, and yet He is made known by Grace to those who love Him intensely, and their freedom of being is assured. In immanence is He known and his gleaming sacred ash is a certain sign of His being the first and last, and apart from the power of His Grace, man is without the rudder of life.

The Holy Ash is the insignia of the bequest of freedom from the density of the triple sources of defilement by the One who dons it. The world gets reduced to ashes during the period of dissolution and Siva dons it. All things in the last resort find their refuge in Him. That is what the sacred Ash on Siva's form betokens. It is the amulet of protection against delusive forces. Tiruvacagam alludes to the potency of the Holy Ash:

“Protected by the armor of Ash,
The material forces retreat
Before the gleaming shield of Ash,
It is worn by the Lord's devotees.” 46. 1.

The cow dung is the mala-defiled excreta of the cow. But when it is burnt in fire, it becomes pure and fit to be worn as a panacea for all ills. In this way, the Ash contains within it, the seed of reemanation, as well as the cause of illumination of the Anma. The Holy Ash unfolds the philosophical essence of Saiva Siddhantham, as well as the manifesting power of the Divine Grace. It is the power of the Grace personified as the consort of Siva, also termed ParaSakti. who illumines souls with the knowledge of the transcendent and Absolute Siva, and who is also their sole refuge. Divine Grace energises the anma with the imprint of His Will, Purity, Fearlessness. Detachment from the senses and attachment to the Immutable, who is Love par excelsis. In utilization-not mere understanding, lies its efficacy.

Such is the essence conveyed by the Saiva Saints in their allusions to the power of the most perfect symbol of Siva's supremacy, Grace and love. The Ash distinguishes all who

profess to be Saivites. They should don the Holy Ash and validate in their lives, the efficacy and potency of His potent Grace manifested as Ash.

“Those who don the Holy Ash,
The symbol of insight into Siva,
They shall avert adversities many.
Theirs is the amulet of the letters Five.”

- Saint Sambandar.

7. LIFE IN SIVA

Resolving Conflicts

Life la Siva - What a great mystery!

What does the Saiva faith and its Philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta
reveal about this mysterious life In Siva? -
The Auspicious. Supreme Being, full of Bliss?

Whose life is the next question? My life and yours and the myriad lives in this Universe.
How wonderful?

The life on earth is complicated enough not only for the individual self but for that
matter, for the whole of humanity, and why do we want to seek new pastures of Life in a more
complex setting of Siva's world? Is not one step enough for us?

The quest of the unknown has always interested man, and so even in these strenuous
times when everything seems to be on the brink of chaos, we feel inclined to give up the novel
fields of science and technocracy, and explore the ancient well-worn path of the Saiva
Siddhanta to prove the solution of our problems.

What does it say of our life with Siva?

That is the crucial issue. Science has arrived at a well-nigh perfect conception of the
physical world by carefully arranging the observed facts, and utilising them for advancing
material gains. In the same way, Saiva Siddhantam is a Way of Life which accepts the spiritual
and mental world without prejudice and opens the inner recesses of man.

The light of the Saiva Siddhanta has been kindled by Revelation, Reason and personal
experience of the realised Seers, whose testimony is unimpeachable.

The Saiva Text Tirumantram which is a philosophical, mystical and revelatory manual
of Saivism, postulates the verities of Pati - Siva, Pasu-Anma, and Pasa-the limitations exercised
on the anma.

“Let your thought penetrate to the utmost reach.
Discern the Truth as best as you can.
Our Lord is so Real even if some deny Him.
Seek ye this well tried, goodly Path”.
- Tirumantram.

In another stanza of equal felicity, Tirumular, the Author of Tirumantram, whose age
cannot be ascertained as chronological data did not appeal to the Saivites, defines this special
pathway precisely:

“It is not one; It is not two; It is non-dual.
Not involved in religious disputation nor reproach.
It follows with Love, the gracious Feet of Sakti.

Thus, the Anma enjoys the bliss of Sivam.
This is the goal of the Siddhanta pathway”
-T/M. 1437.

This is our goal in life, this life-in-Siva. All is Siva Everything is Sivamayam.

Tirumular and all before and after him affirm that this pathway leads to the accomplished End - the goal of freedom from all limitations and conditions, freedom from the gnawing fears and pains of life, as well as its joys and triumphs, all, all subject to change and decay.

He illustrates this in simple language:

“There are two positions, I and He.
I discerned them both as one; took the I
And placed it at His Feet as my offering.
E’er after, distinction of “I and He” retracted.
- Tirumantram 1441.

So here is the secret of our Life with Siva unfolded. It is as modern, as it is ancient. It is an excellent device ‘upayam’ - to take the ‘I’ and place it at the Feet of Siva, spontaneously as a love offering. Tirumantram expresses it as a comingling of “I - He” in Love, for is not Siva equated with Love?

In her “Atputa Tiruvanthathi”, that illustrious Saiva mystic saint named St. Karaikal Ammayar, recalls her experience in “*Sivatuva*”—union with Siva in this way:

“The knower is Himself; The subject of knowledge too
Himself, and the wisdom of knowing also is Himself.
He’s the object and subject of the Universe.
He indeed is the goal of Absolute Reality.”

Who is this Himself? St. Appar has opened the window of Reality in his famous Lyric; ‘Who can decipher Thy Greatness’?’

“Thou who art Peerless, Supreme One!
The seminal seed in the minds of Seers.
Oh, Sovereign Lord, nectar of Rulers just.
Thou, the embodiment of Vedas and Agamam.
Preciosity of Gold and Gems, Experienter manifold,
Thy sublime Glory art so unique that.
One can only exclaim, what mystery is thine!
In what other way can I extol Thee”.

- St. Appar. VI. 95. 7.

Here indeed is a change from our worldly life, where most people live in a whirl of activities, with superficial thought patterns and insecure values. Life with Siva seems fraught with significance, a panacea against the poverty of the spirit and a promise of fulfilment.

St. Sambandar, who lived in the seventh century and whose advent marked a new phase in the Religion of Saivism, reminds man not to rely entirely on Reason as the sole Guide to discover our links undying with the Supreme Siva;

“By inference and logic be not tempted.
To probe into the resplendent One, our Light!
Live in tune with Him who cures you of all sorrows.
Ye men of righteousness! Come to bide with our Lord”.

It is a powerful call to wake up from our sense - slumber of unreality, and approach the Sovereign Lord with love in the heart for the wisdom of the One supreme illuminating our steps and righteous acts at every turn. St. Appar bids us all to “come unto the Lord”, because He alone can still the sad music of humanity. “Come with faith and purity, and even then, though no writ can be issued to certify Siva’s majestic greatness. He will bestow the bounty of His Grace on His chosen ones.” That is the language of a man of God who has experienced the Presence of God within him.

Here is an intriguing challenge. We begin to ponder. Who can it be, who entrances and transmutes the soul of man, like the magnet before the iron rod? What is He and His connection with me, lowly me, if He is such an omnipotent omniscient Being? Where am I and my anma - the essence of my being, in relation to Siva? In what way are we bound to each other - He, the Absolute Reality (Sat), and I, the Sadasat, neither Sat nor asat fully, but partaking of both? The inter-relatedness of the Anma with the world of Maya, Karma and the Anava, and the yet closer relationship of the Anma with Siva, who is in eternal co-existence with the Form and Will of His Power, is the central theme of Saiva Siddhanta as a philosophy of Religion and of life.

What Next?

Seek and ye shall find. Therefore, it is essential for us to halt and review what we have examined so far. Our brief survey has given a general outline of the sacredness of life, according to the tenets of Saiva Siddhanta. The fundamental core is our relationship with Siva, the Absolute Being through His Energy known as Cit-Sakti. The Anma which is eternal is inextricably bound up with the limitations exerted by the primordial matter (Maya), and the effect of deeds (Karma), as well as its inherent impurity (‘Anavam’). Through all the succession of endless births and deaths, the Power of Siva - His Form and Will operates on the Anma as its eternal prop, as its sustaining saving Grace. As long as the Anma is tainted with impurity, this Grace is concealed and veiled, only to be revealed in its full luminosity, when the anma regains its pure consciousness. The miracles of Grace appear to be “the religious name for whatever happens”, and the Philosopher brought up in the Faith of Siva sees in them, the highest and noblest expressions of Truth.

What is Self-Knowledge?

Let us now turn to the inner and outer realm of the Anma and find a satisfactory answer to the question of who Am I?

We begin our search in the fields of science, in the objective universe. Our physical world, our mental, intellectual and psychic worlds in which we gravitate, subject to change and

destruction, reflects the immanence of Siva, and hence our life on the physical plane is far from being profane. It is an affirmation of the truth that we live and move and have our being in Siva, with Siva, for Siva, the Beyond.

Today, intelligence is at its maximum force in the collective re-search along the road of science. What has it to say about the Life infinite with Siva, which we have postulated, already, as our primary objective in life?

In the days of old, Brahma, the creator and Vishnu, the sustainer of the celestial, terrestrial and nether worlds set out to find the crown and base of Siva's pillar of light. To-day many intellectual giants toil a whole life-time to reach the imposing crown and the unexplored depths of the mighty tree of science, and leave behind a big question mark at the little done and the vast undone! Investigations and experiments in the phenomenal world of matter have all too imperceptibly lead them to the uncharted expanding territory of the spirit. Here, they realise that they are not qualified to survey the kingdom of the Spirit, but they perceive a vital link, a link that is of immense importance to the Anma - the inmost core of being - the real non-real. Science has not touched the fringe of this problem of the vital link - not yet.

At the Cross Roads of Life, there appear many alternatives.

We cry halt at this juncture, as science cannot penetrate any further. A re-orientation is necessary for which a different approach and method of thought become essential. He who cannot be fathomed by Brahma and Mal shall reveal Himself to the lowly and the weak. It is validated that He can be caught "in the net of love". So too, today as in the ever present Now, hand in hand with nuclear physics and metaphysics. Seers of Truth are at work to draw the essence from the things discovered, from the principles unraveled out of the thirty-six categories of existence and their subsidiaries (Tattvas), the interdependent connections and conjunctions that link matter with the spirit so as to make us exclaim: "It was all His sport - His Divine Leela". It was all His Will". In that exclamation can be discerned the resonance of the Power of Grace of Siva. From out of the myriads of details and configuration of basic principles emerge the pattern of human life evolving at high speed to the frontiers of Being Absolute, knowledge Absolute culminating in the Bliss of Sivam-Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The chant of Sarvam Sivamayam and that of
Aum Sivayanama assumes great significance

Not only to the philosopher-scientist, but to the physicist-Philosopher. Remembering the Name of Siva, forever lisping Sivayanama ye who stand at the cross roads, follow the straight path in the foot prints of the Saiva Seers, and attain the bliss of communion with Siva. He is the acme of liberation, Love and Light Eternal.

A Look at the human machine

The Saivite looks upon the human body as a wonderful framework designed by the Creator to be the temple of the Anma.

Sang St. Appar:

"The body is the temple and the Mind its servitor".

From the minute, invisible living cells, tissues are formed and these in turn develop into organs, each with its special function, and are encased in the bony structure, with its network of blood and nerve vessels, activated by an invisible power. A series of processes like combustion, digestion and assimilation are going with-in the sheath of the body. The Anna manifests itself in the body, and this expression of Reality is different for everybody. What is the Anna, leads to the question, 'Who am I?' Here is hidden the answer to the nature of the Essential Being, which must be known, before we can proceed with our life in Siva.

Who am I? What is my Essence? What is Wisdom?

The life in the senses cannot be ignored in our effort to penetrate the essential. We shall cite one example in support of our statement.

In Sutra eleven of the classic philosophical treatise of 'Sivajnanabotham', is a reference to the function of the eye in the esoteric sense. The purport of the Sutra is explained thus; "The soul in union with the eye causes it to see, the nature of the eye being to see, when it is caused to see. And the soul itself sees. Similarly, God in union with the soul causes it to know and God Himself knows. Therefore, by love and devotion, in which the soul never forgets, but is in union with God, it attains the experience of divine bliss."

In the language of the Siddhanta Philosophy, the soul attains the Sacred Feet of Siva.

Pasa-Jnana is concerned with the knowledge of the world of matter and includes man's knowledge of the human organism too. Scientists have chartered this field of knowledge with its expanding frontiers. Man sees with his eyes. The eye is like a camera. The light reflected by the objects falls into it through the lens, then an image forms on the retina and we see. Deep at the back of our eyes are millions of elements sensitive to light. At their extremity, the process of transformation of light variation into electric variation is taking place, extending in the form of electric charges. These charges propagate along a chain of nerve-cells, with their neutron-nuclei and neurite antennae, and appear to be deposited in the brain-cortex fields, and possibly the final picture or complete recording is performed by an electronic ray, very much like the technique in television.

The "seeing process" is thus concerned with the transforming of material variations into electric patterns. It is a knowledge of the existing principles. We are dealing with a most subtle aspect of energy which is associated with electromagnetic phenomena. These rays travel like waves, and wave lengths may vary according to which the power of penetration increases. The scale of these wave lengths is infinite, and our powers of vision perceive only a small layer. There are a great many layers which we do not perceive ordinarily. Why is this so? Let us keep this in mind.

Further, we see images in our dreams. So, we are able to see without our eyes. Are they merely reflections or authentic pictures never seen before? Considering all these transforming processes in our scheme of perception, we wonder whether what we think we see are 'real' or only appearances. No one can assure us.

From sensorial physics, we step into nuclear physics. Here we have found out on minute analysis, matter does not exist at all, in the way we imagined it to be! The minute particles of matter (molecule) appear to consist of basic elements (atoms) which revolve round each other at great speed. They are composed of nuclei with electrons revolving round them at great speed.

This nuclear particle is not a concrete substance, but a centre of forces. So, what we call matter seems to have been developed from energy, emanating from something that created the primeval atom, consisting of one positive, irradiating centre, the nucleus with an antipode, revolving round it, which is absorbing, called electron. It is like a miniature solar system that gives us the illusion of something concrete. This is the substratum of the primordial matter, which Saiva Siddhanta calls Maya. The energies necessary for this play of atoms are infinitely great. From where does this infinite store of energy spring? The scientist is mute at this dilemma. The Siddhantin steps in at this stage.

The Recovery of Radiant Energy

We have asked many questions and the answers to them are the reward of a deep study of the Pathway of Saiva-Siddhanta - the way of Life in Siva and Sakti. Science is a useful hand-aid to Religion and Philosophy. When the atom is split, part of the binding energy is released and when controlled can give an inexhaustible source of energy. All phenomena we see around us are the result of combinations of the series of basic elements, and matter is seen to change into radiant energy. It must be understood that it is radiation - energy which sets up patterns of atomic structure, through which an external form is produced. The change in its aspect is in accordance with the inner rate of rotation. The atom structure appears as water, and also in the form of ice or vapour.

In what way do these changes set in, from radiation - energy into atomic structure, and evolving into vapours, liquids and solid matter? Science is not able to give the answer. Saiva Siddhantam views it as the working of the Power of Siva, and attributes to the Energy of Cit-Sakti, the secret of a completely identical structure propagating into different physical states, each with its own inherent laws. Iron in its solid state has its forces of pressure, attraction, resistance which are fixed according to physical principles. When it becomes liquid, all these laws cease to operate and a new principle, that of liquidity comes into action. In the gaseous state, different sets of laws come into action. When gas, under very high temperature passes into radiation-energy, the kinetic laws come into operation.

9. THE CAUSAL POWER OF SIVA

This Power of Siva - Cit Sakti or Adi-Sakti - of the Form of Divine Will, and made feminine because of its generating productivity, controls the processes of the transformation of matter into energy. It is the causal Power, the creative Energy emanating from the Reality that is Sivam, that acts in all these extraordinary processes. Further analysis seems superfluous.

In the Macrocosm as well as in the Microcosm, the kinetic energy operates behind the structure of forms, in not only creating them but sustaining them; This energy of growth passes into that of dissolution and the phase of renewal, so beautifully brought out in the doctrine of the Dance of Siva, with His fivefold operations, which include His “*Anugraha*” or Grace as well. The “*Panca-Krytia*” of Siva is concerned with these five operations, and without His Will, not a hair or atom moves.

“His Will be done.
Mine is only to serve Him.
Thine is to support me.”

sang St. Appar in one of his moments of intense awareness and insight. That is the acknowledgment of the power of Siva through His Cit-Sakti, the form of Divine Will.

The Divine Will

In the human body are present these phases of creative energy, growth and renewal - that of air in the lungs necessary for metabolism, liquids like the blood and bile and saliva and solid matter like the bones.

Who is at the rock basis of all these processes? The question has been answered in all the moving songs of Devarnam and Tiruvacagam, as the Will of Siva-His Causal Power popularly known as the Divine Mother. Sivajnana Botham too deals logically with the Reality of God, and the relationship of the anma with the finite world of matter on one hand, and with the infinitude of grace linked to Infinite Siva on the other.

The Siddhanta approach to Reality proves that this Supreme Being is in implicit union with His Ajna-Divine Will, the gracious Power of God, and its effective operation in the macrocosm and microcosm. Thus do the mortal beings undergo the processes of “going and coming”, experiencing the fruits of their actions, through the power of God-known in Saiva-Siddhanta by varied terms as the Divine Mother, and *Tiruvadi- Feet-Tal*, Cit-Sakti etc. This inseparable union of God with the anma and the world is made possible by His gracious Power-Cit-Sakti. Here is revealed one of the fundamental doctrines of Saivism, that God as Absolute, Transcendent being apart from the world, is Pure Sivam-Sat. When we regard Him in relation with world. He is the Energy or Cit-Sakti.

Let us revert to the analogy of the seeing-eye. Our eyes with which we see, are a species of energy-concentration; and in our perception, we confront the relative energy-concentration of the eyes, with the relative energy-concentration of the object seen. This confrontation is transmitted in electric impulses and deposited in the brain cortex. Here it is interpreted as some image, which is affirmed by the eye in the visual image of a “substance”. The eye seeth not,

unless made to see by the aid of the light outside and light within. This analogy explains the anma's perception of the Lord, and God's relation so intimate with the anma.

Saiva Siddhantam gives the term "Pasu-Jnanam" to the knowledge of the self, which is "sirtarivu"-limited and conditioned knowledge, and which does the crucial "interpretation". Science stops at this point, as shades of the prison house begin to close upon its reasoning and analytic activity. But penetration is made possible, and the Why and How are communicated by the "Enlightened", who see into the life of things. St. Tayumanavar in his Canticle on "the All-Filling Fullness", reveals this insight into the meaning of the soul's existence, in the profound perspective of the knowledge of Siva. There is pure awareness floating on the surface of the knowing self, who is freed from its state of bondage to the phenomenal world of man:

"No atom moves but by His motion.
So, the sages aver: what follows then?
What is knowing, and what unknowing?
Who knoweth, knoweth not, of men?
Who are the silent ones? Who are they who revel?
In ceaseless prattle as I do.
Whence cometh the delusion of the mind?
What is sternness and tenderness?
Whence is Creation and what art action?
And elemental changes, where from?
Falsehood and truth, failure and success.
Evil and good in consequence whence?
What about patience and impatience?
Who are the great and who the small?
What moves the foes and the friendly ones?
Without Thee none, in Thee art all.
Oh, life of life that sustains everything
In existence here and hereafter.
Thou Plenitude that pervadeth ALL".

- St. Tayumanavar 89.

This is Siddhanta's pathway-par excelsis. The workings of the power of God, His Grace, are so wondrous as to baffle the mind of man at its highest reach. That His gracious interplay, unfathomable by reason and analytic research, can be known by Revelation and Intuitive perception, is the cardinal feature of Saiva Siddhantam.

Let us make our stand-point clear. On the level of physical phenomena, we live within narrow limits. On the level of the physics of the senses, we discern that all perceptions are transformed through chemical-electric processes into electric charges, deposited in the brain cortex. That which we perceive are pictures which we make of things. It remains a question who or what is the *We*. *Who am I* is the keyhole. The Siddhantin makes every effort to find the key hole. Knowledge circles round the attainment of self-consciousness by the ego, by which it becomes aware of itself:

"Who am I? What is wisdom?
Who doth know me as existent and real?"

The attainment of bliss is experienced in a surrender of egoity at the encounter with Siva. He wields the Master key. The self must know the not-self to know itself, and thus gain insight into the life with Sivam. This is divine illumination.

In a well-known Ode, St. Appar unravels the mystery of “Who or What” is the Ego, in relation to the supreme Mover, the *triple-Eyed Siva*.

“If Thou causeth to whirl, who’ll not revolve?
If Thou causeth to dissolve, who’ll not submit?
If Thou goadeth to run, who’ll not do so?
If Thou causeth to melt, who’ll not succumb?
If Thou causeth to sing, who’ll not respond?
If Thou causeth to serve, who’ll not obey?
If Thou causeth to see, who’ll not perceive?
Who can see Oh Triple-Eyed, if thou doth not illumine”?

Behind the Seeing Eye

All levels of knowledge are comprehended and beyond it, the higher experiences of insight into Reality are affected by the Anima operating at all levels on the Will of the Supreme. The Lord is the Subject of man’s experiences. The Anima fails to perceive by its own perception. The eye seeth not, unless made to see by the aid of the light outside and the light within.

On the level of nuclear physics, we have found that all is energy and kinetic activity without being able to decipher the essence and source of this energy. Scientists offered interpretations after working with mental pictures of material, concrete molecules, atoms, protons and electrons etc. Now they postulate that these are all expressions of the working of an energy, hence “effects”.

These kinetic effects appear to be vibrations, static vibrations as carrier-waves over which other dynamic vibrations can pass through as travelling electric charges, with their accompanying magnetic fields. Viewed in this light, our body is a fine, most subtle network of energies, and fields with their centres of power. Our Yoga-Sastras, long before the advent of science, had discovered these centres of power, and utilised them fully to attain full freedom from the involvement of the thirty-six (Tattvas), categories of existence. They had a realization of the unchanging Reality of the Supreme Being, and the changing nature of the empirical phenomena.

In the act of seeing, the light energy with its definite charges and patterns passes on the centres which are electric fields, which at that moment merely change in potency, just as on a different level, these charges are constantly changing. Such transformation processes can be discerned effortlessly, if we rid ourselves of the veils of ignorance and impurity, and “see” with the eye of Grace. The carrier field acts as a kind of brake-field, affected by an active field, on which manifestation takes place. The Anima in the metaphysical language inherently glued to impurity, experiences resistance to its movement towards the goal of freedom-to break away from the narrow limits and work towards a higher and wider insight. Hence the travail of a life geared to Siva-Realization.

Ordinarily, our perception is not something all pervading. We have perceptions of something, we “look against”, as in film close-up taken one after another in time, but we know very little of the Essence, the Real behind it. For the most part, living as we do in the world of objective phenomena, we are screened off from Reality, and hence our restlessness, fears and relative values.

Sight and Insight

We now turn to St. Meikanda Deva’s Sivajnana Botham aphorism XI. It expounds on the metaphysical implication of the Seeing Eye and brings to the fore, the inter relatedness of the Anna with the power of the Grace of Siva.

“It is the anna within that directs the Seeing Eye to see.
So too, this unseen anna is made to see by the Lord within.
In ever-remembering love, the anna moves towards the Feet of Haran”. S.J.B. XI.

Such is the plenary experience of the anna. It is the Lord in union, who makes the anna see steadfastly at Him, in uninterrupted love. When the Anna becomes one with God, it experiences His Grace. That is, the anna experiences the bliss and love, when it is one with Siva. Therefore, he will know through the anna, that which the knower (anna) knows. The anna in union with God knows, feels and acts in the attainment of Divine Blessedness.

The Eye cannot see an object, unless an illuminating light uniting with the light of the eye, falls also upon the object. Similarly, anna whose nature it is to know, when helped to know, cannot know unless God’s knowledge unites with it, and passing with it to the object, unites with it also. Alone, they cannot perceive or know anything Therefore God must be in union with the anna and know, so that the anna may perceive and know. Absolute Siva without any variableness, knows all the perceptions of all the anna, simultaneously. When the anna which in dependence upon God, becomes one with Him and experiences His Grace, Siva becomes for that anna, the beauty of Bliss. He is inseparably one with the anna in that experience of the anna.

This is the attainment of Sivam, what we have called Life-in-Siva, the attainment of the sacred Feet of Siva. It is the experience of Divine Blessedness in oneness with Siva.

St. Appar alludes to this experience in his popular hymn -

“As the Vina’s pure sound, as moonlight at even,
As the south wind’s soft breath, as the spring’s floating heat.
As the pool hovered over by whispering bees.
So sweet is the shade ‘neath our Father’s Feet.”

The perpetual Presence of the Divine Power is an established truth of Saivam. Its manifestation in varying degrees of potency is the mystery of religion. Saiva Siddhantam mediates through the communication of the “Tirumurai” seers, and the philosophers and preceptors, the Essence of the Indwelling, Inseparable Power of Siva in the microcosm and the macrocosm, as well as its application, utilization, and experience of it in an infinite variety of ways, with a clarity, lucidity and veracity unknown in any other systems of philosophy.

10. AVENUES OF REALISATION

Thus, it is, that sutra XI of Sivajnana Botham unfolds the quintessence of Saivism and Saiva Siddhantam. It opens the avenues of the anma's realization of the inseparable union with Siva. This is Moksha-freedom from Pasam comprising all evil, the unoriginated as well as the consequential. The "Malas" that had been kept in check hitherto, have been overcome and the freed self attains "Sivanubhava". This is the recovery of the self-*Siva-labha*. Sutra eleven reveals the spiritual unfoldment of the Anma through three well marked stages. In the Siva-Rupa stage, the gross manifestation of pasa in the form of *tattvas* ceases to obtrude. The anma gains freedom from the not-self. In the Siva-Darsana stage, there is freedom from the root source of "me and mine" by self-effacement, and this leads to the Freedom of Siva- Yoga. Conscious union with Siva is Siva-Yoga. Siva remains unknown to one who seeks him in terms of "I" (the seeker) and the Thou (sought), as He is unknown to the one who seeks Him in one's "I". St. Appar has known Him in Being as "the Lamp of his discriminating consciousness". V. 93.

He intones: "I have known my Lord, Who knows me,
Therefore, how shall I ever forget Him?"

The analogy of the "Seeing Eye", works out the unique manner in which the Lord is "knowable", and enters into the indissoluble relationship with the anma. We have earlier explained the working of the "physical eye", and now we shall proceed to understand the import of St. Appar's jubilant revelation of union with Siva in Being and Will:

"Oh, my eyes! Have you seen Him".

"Yes, after a long search, I have SEEN Him, who cannot be seen outside, but within me; He is seeing me and seen by me." This is Siva-Bhoga. It is an experience of the relation of *Advaita-Sivat*. Sivajnana-Botham unfolds the science of St. Appar's advaita experience which is like the inward unity of consciousness with the function of "seeing" or sight, whereas advaitic relation between the Cit-Sakti and self is like the indissoluble union of light with sight. Hence its great significance in Saiva Siddhantam.

The sense of vision is the eye. The sense of 'eye' is composed of visual light and reaches out to the objects in close association with the outer elemental light. The two species of light cannot be differentiated in their respective work of "seeing and illumining". These two kinds of light inter-penetrates and commingle in a unique way, so as to produce the sensation of vision. The luminous emanation from the eye becomes so subtly attuned to the elemental light that it is difficult to determine its own nature other than that of the outer light, it has merged in, the light that illumines the objects to it (the eye). While it is true that outer light which thereby illumines remains unaffected by the fact of the visual light commingling with it, the difference of light from the visual sense is indicative of the intrinsic transcendence of God in relation to the self. Sutra XI makes it quite clear that the conception of the phenomena of vision in terms of the visual light is delusion, as only its seeing aspect is perceived, but not its *revealing aspect*. Thus, the optical vision cannot take place without the illumination by the outer light.

This explains lucidly the first perspective of Siva-Yoga which implies a union of the perceiving subject and the perceived object. The self in union with God becomes one with Him in being, and abides steadfastly in His service. The second perspective of Siva Yoga consists

in the self-submitting to the will of God, which implies giving up of one's own will. Here the self is in integral union with God as one with His Being, and tuned to His will, so that its will is neither active nor non-active. It is "Summa Iru" - Be still in tune with the Will of Siva.

When the eye intuitively light non-dually, it is illumined by submitting to light. There is pure apprehension. Like the self-underlying its Sight, the knower-Siva, underlying knowledge, is constitutive of the experience of knowing.

So too, when the human will be fully dedicated to the Divine Will, human action ceases to bind, and the world present as the content of its will, gets transformed into the content of the Divine Will. Thus, unison in being and will freedom from egoity and maya and karma are attained by the anma. Freedom, let it be clearly understood, consists in what one freely, freely wills. Will in principle is Freedom itself. Its free exercise is itself its own end - The freedom of will to enjoy the experience of Bliss-that is Siva. This is life in-Siva, life with Siva-*Sivanandanubhava*. "Thy will be done" "All, all art Thy Will, Oh Lord Supreme" is the expression of the absolute Truth, and He who knows it enjoys the highest

Siva-jnanam or immediate self-awareness of Siva as content, involves the exercise of the functions of "Iccha and Kriya" by the self. The self is not only pure awareness (Jnana), but also pure love and activity. This is Siva-bhoga where the self's awareness of Siva as the subject, implies continuous memory-Jnana. There is also the self's utter dedication and submission to Siva, who is the transcendent "I" in the self and this is the exercise of Kriya. Then follows an ecstatic love for the Indweller within, welling up in surges of devotion as in Tiruvacagam, and this is Iccha

The Attainment of Siva-Bhoga

Siva is the outer light which reveals vision to the 'eye' of the self, and also the Inner Light, which pervades the visual content with the vision of the self. This is the finest culmination of Siva-Bhoga-Siva's primordial "oneness with self" - the self-having its being under the refuge of the Divine Feet.

In Tiruvacagam, is the Hridaya-Mantra of invocation to the Gracious Feet of Siva, in the opening verses of Siva-puranam, which are chanted daily by the Saivites at the going down of the sun and in the mornings:

"Hail, Holy Feet of Him
Who quits not my heart for a split second.
Praise be to the radiant, roseate Feet of Siva,
May He our Solace be
Thy Feet our repose be
Thy kingly Feet, our refuge be
 Beneath Thy sacred Feet,
 They commune with Thee -
 They know the meaning of the song (of Life)
Blest are they in the realm of Siva,
Adoring with all, at His Feet, in obeisance meek".

- Tiruvacagam: Sivapuranam. 1. 11-15; 92-95.

St. Appar in a moment of crisis remembers His Feet.

“My Lord, My Father’s Feet of Grace
Art my shade against the heat of life”.

This is the testimony of one who has experienced the peace of a life in Siva, which in metaphysical language is the realisation of Siva-Bhoga. St. Sundarar, the poet-Saint of the eighth century laments at this imprisonment in the body:

“I roamed, a cur, for many days -
Without a single thought of Thee.
Roamed and grew weary, then such grace
As none could win, Thou gavest me.
Venney-Nallur, in Grace’s shrine
Where bamboos fringe the Pennai,
My shepherd, I became all thine;
How could I now myself forswear”,

VII Tirumurai: 1.2.

Man is given to remembering, combining, interpreting, comparing and recording events in his daily life, that he has no thought of the God, who is directing all these events, till His Grace begins to operate in his life. This search for what is Real is a genuine quest of man. This partition between the processes of thought and Reality is what Siddhantam views as a consequence of the action and inter-action of Maya, Karma and Anava. We can never break through this partition, encumbered as we are with innate impurity. More elevating power is needed, and that is the function of Grace – the Power of Siva. “May Thy Grace illumine my perception”, is the humble prayer of every Saivite. This is an acceptance of a transmission of the essence via the thought-process, which would then stand for the highest form of consciousness. The conscious consummation of Mind, Intellect, Reason and Reflection can only be affected by a force outside their domain, and it is this contact with the Efficient Cause through its Causal Power, that is of cardinal significance in the religious philosophy of Saiva Siddhantam.

It is Will-the gracious power of Siva that penetrates into that phenomenon called consciousness, in its fundamental reality. The co-present God is always a co-present. There are two, but they are never two. God’s unequivocal oneness and all-inclusiveness is the presupposition of his non-duality.

“Thou are not naught in the universe, yet naught is there save Thee”. What is affirmed is their inseparability, a positive condition of co-presence.

No amount of theorising can bring to light, the Truth of these experiences, unless and until they are revealed. That is the reason why I think that “Meikanda Sastras” - Treatises on the philosophy of Saiva Siddhantam, valuable as they are, cannot supplant the revelatory personal experiences of Reality communicated by the Devaram Seers. They speak in mysterious language of the knowledge of the spirit as integral intuition of the truth of existence at its source. Such wisdom leads to the freedom of the self.

The Goal

The goal of human existence is to comprehend and apprehend the Oneness of things in eternal spirit. This is brought out lucidly in the Miracle-Ode of Thiruvacagam by St. Manicavasagar - the great mystery of the inter-relatedness of the subtle workings of the anna with that of the Divine Will, the gracious Power of Siva. By their intuition, these Seers of Wisdom realized the nothingness of man and their intimate relationship to the God behind all, and so in their great compassion, urge us, the struggling humanity to establish a living contact with It, and attain lasting happiness. Such is the gateway to the experience of unitive life in Siva.

St. Manicavasagar senses a peace which man did not make, and cannot mar. He sings.

“My past bonds dissolved, present perplexities effaced,
And future ills eased; the Lord of Love,
He has drawn me to Him. In chastened thought.
Draw I nigh unto the Lord of Thillai”. 40. 3.

Browning in Paracelsus exclaims a similar exultation in the supremacy of the power of God:

“I know I felt (perception unexpressed)
Uncomprehended by our narrow thought
What God is, what we are,
What life is-How God tastes an infinite joy
In infinite ways. One everlasting bliss -
All power proceeds from whom all being emanates”.

It is the goal of life in Siva. Those who have crossed the threshold, and proceeded towards that which lies beyond thought, have held before us a number of solutions to follow their pathway. Enlightenment, Wisdom, Love, Service, Worship is some of the practices advocated, to combat the stupendous limitations of our inherent impurity. Purity is the password at the threshold.

A new stimulus is needed, and a new attitude, and a new thought process to embark on this uncharted journey-Man’s discovery of his nothingness, of his ever-growing humility, of the balance of deeds good and bad, of the delusive potency of the changing world, and its own innate impurity. An intense yearning is the next step. Energy becomes concentrated and in the light of awareness, we have grown humbler and more dependent, with an ever-expanding reverence for the omnipotence behind all creation.

Thus, comes about a transformation, and we begin to understand better, the inner spiritual laws. Spiritual knowledge is a series of experiences distinguished by the stage of knowing. These stages are linked to the stages of perception in empirical life. We have outlined how perception leads to immediate knowledge and to intelligible discrimination, and the transmutation from the state of watching things to seeing through things.

In spiritual knowledge, there is a transition from the gross to the subtle, from the known to the dimension of realization or experience. The stages are gross perception, specific awareness, and true perception. We move from error to doubt, to truth.

St. Manicavasagar's "Tiruvandap-Pahuti" in Tiruvacagam traces the first stages in the journey of spiritual knowledge to know God as indwelling the self, as self within the self, and the self as microcosm comprehending within itself the entire cosmos. It is looking within; It is direct perception.

In the canto of "Tirucadagam", St. Manicavasagar elucidates the next stage as that of spiritual Awakening, where the subject surrenders to the object. Here the centre shifts to the transcendent factor of God, from involving difference to non-difference. Thus, from the "form and name" stage to the "darsana" stage which is insight, self-critical and self-subordinated, we move to the crucial phase of integral knowledge which is the culmination of knowledge, and to the vision of Being, identical with all and yet transcending all.

"Thou art all and yet not-all".

Being is non-other, and also wholly other, and this stage of "Suddhi" is activated by incipient revelation. Suddhi implies a vision purified of all impurities. In his "Ditty on Recollection", the Author of Tiruvacagam recalls the untarnished glory of the supreme Siva and chanting His Name, he sips the nectar of His Grace in the fullness of realisation in this manner:

"Did I perform any worthy acts of worship?
Did I merit initiation of "Sivayanama"?
Like honey, nectar sweet, my blessed Lord Siva,
Of His own accord came and entered my Soul,
He bequeathed His serf, the legacy of Grace,
This bodily existence, from that day, I loathed".

- Tiruvacagam 38. 10.

The fruit of Religious Practice has been tasted by St. Appar, and he has given a lucid picture of this state of the transfiguration of the anma in the Presence of Siva in a poem of singular beauty:

"Refashion the plough of Truth and sow the seed of devotion.
Weed out the false and foul and with waters of patience.
Irrigate thy heart fortified with worthy fences around.
Perceive in this pursuit thy own true self in Him.
Thus ordained, in radiant fullness of Grace,
Thou shalt reap the harvest of felicity in Siva".
The field of Life Experience needs the
Service of the plough of Truth."

The plough of Truth shall till the anma-field. This is the work, the service ordained by Siva's Grace, and the plough symbolises the "Irai-Pani" - Lord's service, referred in Sutra Ten of Sivajnana Botham. St. Appar bids us espouse Truth as the only fruitful mode of worship to attain the goal of life - the shelter of Siva's gracious Feet of omniscience and omnipresence. Here self-assertion yields to self-abnegation, when *myself* is attracted to *Himself*, and the buoyancy of love loosens the binding cords of "I and mine". Consciousness thus illumined by the light of Grace, the anma experiences the all-pervading, all permeating presence of Him, referred as *Avane*, who is Sivam personalized, and the effacement of *Thane* - Mine, in Him.

We shall listen to St. Appar's song which communicates the revealing essence of service to Siva:

“The moving water He made stand unmoving in His locks,
And my thoughtless heart He hath fixed in thought of Him alone.
He taught me that which none can learn, what none can see laid bare.
What tongue tells not He told:
He pursued me and made me His own.
The spotless Pure, my fell disease He healed.
He revealed Himself to me in Punturutti’

All impeding obstructions and besetting conflicts of the opposing tendencies in thought, word and action are swept off before the irradiating rays of Siva-Sat: the anma lives in full accord with His Divine Will. What confidence and security to the anma (Pasu) that was distraught for so long and without the tender protection of the Pati - the cowherd! Appar, the freed cow sings the song of liberation:

“No man holds sway o’er us,
Nor death nor hell fear we:
No trembling’s, griefs of mind;
No pains nor cringing’s see,
Joy, day by day, unchanged.
Is ours, for we are His,
His ever, who doth reign.
Our Sankara, in bliss.
Here to His Feet, we’ve come,
Feet as fair as full bloomed flowerets;
Behold His ears adorned with (Sakti’s)
Ear-ring and (his own) white conch-shell”.

Revealing indeed is the perfect path of excellence, this Siva-Neri, which is the Saiva Neri followed by the adherents of Saivism, the Way to Siva. It points to the goal of the indissoluble union of the anma with the Lord - “*Avane Thane yahiya an neri*”, In complete surrender, the anma commingles with the Supreme One - Ekanahi - His will in perfect harmony with His Will, sustained by unquestioning trust, faith and love. This is the import of “*Irai Pam Nirka*”. In this state of absolute dedication, the fetters that bound the Anma, *mala-maya-valvinai*, automatically wane and wither away. Sutra X. S. J B.

The Light of Love

The effect of the mediation, the active operation of Siva's Grace on the anma, dissociated from its impurities, delusions and ignorance, is exquisitely communicated by St. Manickavasagar in his Garland of Praise-Porti Tiruahaval, in Tiruvacagam:

“In the cycle of life from an ant to elephant
Through many matrices escaping;
In human birth within my mother's womb.
From the struggle of germinal fertility escaping,
.... escaping this, escaping that
Thus, did I emerge and grow from year to year.

Escaping In a dizzy world of toil and moil
Escaping manifold desires and enslavement.
The consciousness of the divine awakened in me
The yearning for the Supreme God
Letting not go what had been grasped,
Heart in prayer, melting like wax in sight of tire.
Weeping, trembling, dancing, shouting,
singing, praising, gripping like babes,
What has been clutched So, with ceaseless love
Swelling, overflowing, tossing like waves.
Heart softening, body quivering
The world at me as a madman laughing.
Lost to shame unswerving
Eager with yearning to know
My goal, the Supreme wonder
In love, His Holy Feet I cling like shadow
Inseparably going before and after and
Forever looking, gazing at His Peace,
Bones melting, heart in agony,
The stream of love, its bank ever flowing
The Senses subdued, crying aloud My Lord -
Words faltering, hair standing on end,
Hands clasped in worship, heart blossoming
Eyes filled with tears of joy.
Moment to moment nurturing His Love,

To such as these oh Lord! art Thou Mother
And Thou forever protecteth them -
Glory be to Thee!"

- Tiruvacagam: 11.89.

This indeed is the meaning of the life of man in Siva. It is to experience the blessedness of His Love. With his back to the stage of the world, St. Manicavasagar gazes within his own being to find the Luminous Grace, illuminating the very interstices of his being. This is the finest and first-hand commentary of Advaitic union of the anma with Siva. "*Avane-Thane Yahi-Ekanahi*", over which volumes have been written down the ages. To what extent can these learned treatises depict the grandeur of the relationship of man with *Siva-Sambandam*? Look at the Poet Saint, his senses subdued, pure and radiant with love serene, communicating to us, even us who are far, far away from the vision supernal, of his communion with Siva, who hath made him, HIS OWN. Man yearns to be a participant in the Life of Love in Siva.

St. Manicavasagar does not define the nature of his relationship with Sivam, as our Siddhanta Philosophers have attempted - whether it is one or two, or not-one, not-two. His experience is the revelation, and we behold the ardent lover in the act of peerless worship of His Holy Feet. That indeed is "*Irai Pani*" - Obeisance to the Lord's Will. No more analysis is required to validate the truth of Sutra X of Sivajnana Bodham. It stands self-revealed, and we leave aside the agnostic to find his lost path.

The more we meditate on this beautiful experience of Life in - Siva of St. Manicavasagar, the more do we draw nearer and nearer Siva's sacred Feet, to bask in the

gracious illumination of Siva. That is the reward of the spiritual gain prescribed in the tenth aphorism of Sivajnana Botham.

“Practice purity; Let the kindly light of love lead you to the shelter of His Grace - Do not search outside nor strive to serve Him from outside. “Irai Pani” Serve Him by being, just “be”. Be suffused with love at His bestowal of Grace; with elevated consciousness, praise Him for this recovery of self, and Realise the Reality of His eternal abidance in you - within your true self”.

The anma is drawn to “Hara-Hara”, “Siva-Siva” the Supreme Reality, no longer different or apart. God being the eternal intuitive witness “knows” of the right moment to reveal the true relation of the anma, by uprooting it from the empirical fields of knowledge and action, and transforming it unto Himself.

Seers like Thirujnanasambandar and St. Manicavasagar affirm, that intuitive revelation of the liberation of self-entails self-disillusionment. In this sense Jnana is the most effective sadhana - spiritual effort, that reveals Siva Himself. Such direct experience of Siva is the highest wisdom and goal of man.

In the radiant glow of the light of Love, man moves towards the Feet of Haran. It is the plenary experience of the anma. It is the Lord in union who makes the anma see steadfastly at Him in uninterrupted love.

“Who will see, oh Triple-Eyed!
If Thou doth not illumine?” St Appar 95. '3.

“He is Himself the Knower and the known”.

This was the affirmation of St. Karaikal Ammaiyar. The anma’s apprehension of God through Jnana is only a *sankalpa-jnana* or *bhava jnana*. The true Jnana is what God himself gives.

Sivajnana Siddhiar elaborates this experience in XI - 311 in the language of metaphysics;

“Those who see the Ultimate Being by the ultimate knowledge granted by Him in His Grace will see nothing else but Him. Any other kind of knowledge is finite and confused knowledge - varying and differing forms of ignorance. The knowledge derived by Sastras and “hearing” are all vitiated by Maya. The knowledge of experience as jnatra, jnana and jneya are *Sankalpa* or conceptual and not realisation. The true jnana which is the knowledge through Grace, transcends all these and it is *Sivajnana*. Hence the jivanmukta even when embodied will see Siva alone, and not either the *pasa* or himself, the *pasu*. God abides in him and nought else”.

The songster of “Ruby Utterances”, St. Manicavasagar in his Lyric of Thillai (31) unfolds the process of his illumination, in the wake of his overwhelming love for God:

“I knew Him not, yet He mingled in my mind and will;
And in gracious love changed my way of life to His ...

..... He bound me to His Holy Feet by the Cords of my will,
The Enlightened One's creative sport, in Thillai I saw".

- 31. 3. 7.

Yet another unique facet of Saiva Siddhantam is discerned in these recollections of our Saiva Saints. Man gets illumined by knowledge, but his life, his essence of living, is constituted of love.

Why So?

Love or pure devotion (Bhakti) is the act of the faculty of Will, by which the anma is drawn to the Feet of Siva. There is an imperceptible transformation of the anma from "Pasutvam", to "Sivatvam". It implies that in its bound state, the Lord is the Indweller within it. In its enlightened state, the anma becomes one with Him by perceiving its actions to be the action of the Lord. The 'Pasukaranas' get transmuted into 'Sivakaranas', when it is in union with His Feet. Tiruvarutpayan - The Fruit of Grace - by St. Umapati Sivacharyar puts it succinctly;

"Though it has attained to the knowledge of everything,
The "Knower" knows nothing but the "Known".

In this manner do we come, step by step to realize that the whole of our life in the stage of the world, is a kind of ripening process with an inter-play of opposites - good and bad, action and reaction, joy and sorrow, with constant ups downs. The 'Ups' are the phases of inner awakening, and the 'Downs' are the periods when we are cut off from the inner light and there is discord and strife within us, which gets reflected in our life outside. It is as a panacea for the repeated faltering's and staggering enchantments, that our classical Texts on Saiva Siddhantam, elucidate the imperative necessity for spiritual effort; they unfold before the "seeing eye" the beatific vision of the fruits of religious practice and open out vistas hitherto undiscovered in the life of 'Jivan Muktar' or Realised souls. From this summit, one can view the integral relationship of the anma with Sivam in its totality.

"The released or liberated knowers (Jivan-Muktar) purified of all inherent impurity (Anava mala) that had impeded them in their quest for the sustaining and radiant Feet of God, seek the affinity of loving devotees. Theirs is the Kingship with the consecrated 'Knowers' who are irresistibly drawn to their chastened presence, and to the holy sanctuaries. They look upon them as exemplifying Siva". Sutra XII - S. J. B.

A realised 'Knower' (Jivan-Mukta) is inevitably drawn to the community of the devout, so that he may fulfil God's Will. The fruit of religious practice finds its consummation in the sanctified community of the servitors of Siva, so that by the collective dynamism of their sanctified love, they may work for the sanctity of all others, who are still groping in the dark.

This love of humanity accruing from the love of God is the highest metaphysical truth enunciated by St. Meikanda Deva. It is indeed the accomplished End of Saiva Siddhantam. Here religion and Philosophy coincide in their quest and fulfilment. Means and End coalesce in this last aphorism of Sivajnana Botham.

The song of the Pilgrim - *Yathirai Pattu* (45) of Tiruvacagam delineates the quintessence of this illuminating aphorism of St. Meikanda Deva:

“These are the devotees of Siva - Jivan Muktar who are self-possessed, with no ties binding them. Guided by their inner light they are makers of destiny. Oft they ask, “Who are we? What is ours? Away with desires! Illusion all!” Thus, vanquishing the ego, they join the holy band of servitors of Siva, espousing His Will as their goal of life. Relinquishing all that is false and fleeting, they align thus to follow the gleaming Feet of Siva”. 45-3.

In this journey to God, the Poet Seer beckons all to join their happy band and not to waver nor linger in solitude. While the gates of Siva-pura are open, he bids them all haste on.

“At the journey’s End, Ye shall taste
The nectar of His Grace. Filled with Love,
Ye shall immerse in the ocean of Bliss”. 45. 10

For the enlightened ‘knower’, all things and persons are His Form, as Siva is in advaita relation with the world and men Their devotion gets accentuated in the company of the devotees of Siva, and revolving in the orbit of love and worship they inspire and radiate sanctity among the others who are yet far from the goal. Sivajnana Siddhiar alludes to this aspect:

“His form is Grace; His attributes are Grace.
His action is Grace. The universe and objects of
Enjoyment are Grace, and all this only
For the sake of souls, tho' He Himself is
Beyond comprehension. S. S. I. 47.
As “sacraments of His perpetual Presence”,

the Saiva Temples should be venerated by all Saivites, as the custodian of the living faith in Siva, and to this day, worship in these temples with their impressive festivals and congregation of pious devotees, is a testimony to the efficacy of love and worship in the Religion of Siva – *Saivism*.

11. ADVAITIC AWARENESS

The Great Experience

In the sacred collections of Devarams and Thiruvagasam, we discover the Great Secret to the Spiritual Practices unraveled to the “Seeing Eye”, and made luminous by the effulgent light of Siva. The revelatory canticles have laid bare the inner disposition, which has become pure and unconditioned. They breathe refreshing courage and hope, that through seeking, suffering and serving, the bruised self of man can break through its sheaths and layers of consciousness, and experience the pure, creative light of Love and Power, pervading all, irradiating all, knowing all, in an all-embracing love.

Saiva Siddhanta considers this Great Experience, not as an external process, but as an essential inner process, leading the anma to the centre of one’s being, freed from the illusion of the senses, the stranglehold of deeds, and the aggrandizement of the “I and mine” (self-love). Each hymn of our Saiva Seers, the “Nayanmar”, is a magnificent on their vital experiences. Their soul - stirring plea is to reject all inhibiting factors and to be aware of the Indweller within. His bounteous Grace and our unforgettable Love can effect this great transformation.

Resonance of Light Waves

This intrinsic constellation of light is an Infinite living Consciousness. It is the wondrous transformation of knowledge into the intensity of Wisdom. “Rational thought becomes synthesized thought, and passes on to symbolic thought, where it Sees unity in the various processes. Then follows *Light thought* causing thoughts to be vitalized and infused with light”.

We have used the vocabulary of Nuclear Sciences to unfold the eternal relationship of Siva and Anma which assumes vital importance in Saiva Siddhantam. St. Pattinathar dwells on this ineffable Experience in a famous Ode:

“In the tiny hair that grows in clusters
In the surface skin that spreads and saves.
In the flesh beneath, sore and ruddy
In the gushing blood that streams within,
In ceaseless ills that cleave to the heart.
In all I searched in vain;
I found not self; nor know it is what
Oh God, whose part is Sakti, Lord of Ganga!
Thy lustrous Light with benign Grace pierces
The murky clouds of Maya and bestows Wisdom
True for me to receive; And all Thy Glory, when
I thus perceive. Thy SELF is known and a sigh
I heave”.

St. Pattinathar confirms the age-old truth of “Know thy Self and thou shalt know all - things”, which is in complete agreement with the approach of Saiva Siddhantam. That everything has come forth from the Energy of Siva, with its effect in the form of vibration, has become quite clear to us today through scientific researches.

Now, this Beauty of the Life-in-Siva, as we have styled this great vital Experience, can be realized by everyone, since it lies confined in the Mid-Point of one's own being, the vital Energy, the Light within, "Elu Param-Jyoti", by whose Grace, one lives now and in Eternity.

From the beginning of time, man has known this truth, and has wrestled with this grand conception - But few indeed, few only have comprehended it, and still fewer have

Experienced It,

from the chain of evidence in our religious Texts. The profoundest expression of this inexpressible Living Experience in non-dual union with Siva – "At His Feet" – as the scriptures indicate, is in my very humble opinion found in the sublime canticle of Sivapuranam by the immortal Scribe of Siva, St. Manicavasagar.

The incantation of his symphony instils awe and stillness amidst us and with dazed reverence, we are led into the recess of the impenetrable and deepest Wisdom of the Self-Luminous, Supreme Siva – The means and End of the true Religion of Saivism, of which Saiva Siddhantam is its Philosophy.

The Culminating Finale

Love of Siva – Anbe-Sivam – has opened a new pathway to God – the Incomprehensible. Pursuing this vista, the egocentricity is dissolved in that intense love of Iva-Sat, whose Being is experienced as the Real, the True. The living and radiating Energy of Siva contains everything within itself and all activities spring from it. It is termed Grace. Man interprets things and events around him in accordance with the working of this Grace in its veiled form. On it depends the involution, the veiling of our consciousness – nucleus, which does all our recording and interpreting of the significance of events, leading to inner awakening attained with inner ripeness. The process of ripening too is brought about by His Grace, and with awakening love comes a tremendous urge to find a solution within us.

For the most part of our life, we are buried like a seed in the earth – buried with precise purpose of developing and reaping a good crop. One experiences the vitalizing, all pervading Omnipotence, His creative Energy or the Divine Will charged with power causing all laws and activity in the stage of involution at first, and maturing later into greater and more expansive Insight. It is the Kriya Sakti at work, concealing Her powers when the anma is still bound to the phenomenal world and revealing Her Grace, when it is freed from the bonds of the senses.

There is another aspect permeating all; it is the vital Energy of serenity and harmonic fullness, which is the work of *Ichha Sakti* or Divine Love. The intelligent Energy with its universal wisdom makes everything in the phenomena lucid and clear, ordered and principled. This is *Jnana Sakti*. All three are varied aspects of the potential living creative Energy known as *Cit- Sakti*, working on the consciousness of the self with its inherent obscurities, the enveloping illusion of the separate self and the denser involutions of matter. The terrible limitations of the senses keep the soul for long buried like a seed in the ground. Thus, Siddhanta Saivam paves the way for the anma's growth, from stem to foliage, from bud to flower, from unripe to ripe fruit.

The Grand Truth of the Beauty of Love, which is the omnipotent Divine Will abides deep within our essence, and evolves the consciousness and ripens through varying

experiences, through the ten stages already defined as the *Dasa-Kariyas*. Here is our self, like a lusterless diamond at first, which has been fixed to a leaden holder, so that it can be polished. The leaden holder is our body, holding our consciousness which becomes polished on the polishing wheel of Karmic circumstance, until it starts to shine intensely. Now it is on the spiritual pathway to the life of Life, relinquishing the “I”, and attuned to the Eternal Being in the Centre, through the repeated processes of involution and evolution. This attuning to the Reality of Siva is the fundamental purpose of living, and we must set our compass to this truth of our *Life-in Siva*. That is the import of Saiva Religion in its full glory.

It is not my intention to defend the Saiva way of life nor to define or analyse, nor compare and contrast it with other systems of knowledge. Ours is a positive quest to read aright the letters on the Sign Posts to the Kingdom of *Sivapura*, deep within the core of being, and to take the right road, sure of the direction at every turn, for deep, deep down the vital Energy of Siva - *His Tiruvadi*, the Holy Feet of Grace is enshrined within each one; It will ceaselessly go on reverberating our own cry of alienation from the Divine.

“If Thou deny Thy Grace, where will I go?
What refuge have I in this vast world of going and coming?
Call me to Thee.”

- Tiruvacagam.

Such experiences are renewed till the ripening processes get fully matured. Then Time, the unerring law of the phenomenal world will also prove non-real in juxtaposition with timeless Eternity, which lies hidden within this crumbling sheath of the human body. Siva, no longer a hiding player stands revealed as the enchanting Beloved, and the pining soul at journey's End exclaims with intense love;

I have seen Him.

He knows everything and everything is known simultaneously, and underneath the cool shade of His Feet, evil there is not, nor impurity, nor the density of deeds, nor the changeful ground. The Anma beneath His sheltering Feet realizes that all is right as *It Is*, and the way. the process of completion is right too.

Viewed in this perspective, *Anavamala* – that determinate self – will clouding our vision of the Highest, the iron-hold of *Karma* and the world of *Maya* with its distractions, play an imperative part. They bring about the necessity of self-activity in order to experience the joy and sorrow, love and hate, desire and desire lessness, through which processes only, there can be an awakening of the anma.

By delving deeper into spiritual insights and comprehending philosophical perspectives, we are not sure of getting nearer our Goal, which is the fruition of our *Love-for Siva*, who is Love. We are unnecessarily broadening our base, and getting involved in minute details, as for instance multiplying our analogies to prove the three-dimensional relationship of Siva with the anma, or probing into the intricacies of the Tattvas or categories to prove the meaningfulness of our existence in the phenomenal world.

There is a moving reference in the grand Epic of Saivism called the *Periyapuranam*, which recounts the evolution of Sakkia Nayanmar, as a Siva-jnani, who followed the precepts of Saivism. He was a Buddhist, who in the course of his spiritual life discovered his intimate

allegiance to Siva and His Sakti, and by his Grace became convinced of the validity of the four cardinal truths of Saiva Siddhantam; there is *the deed, the doer, the consequence or fruit*, and the *One who awards the desert to the doer*. He realised that it was only Siva-Neri, that showed the pathway to realizing Siva's Grace and he followed from within the light of Siva and attained the liberation of Mukti. He realised that meaningless outward forms and labels did not matter, so long as he took to ceaseless remembrance of the Grace of Siva, while outwardly remaining a Buddhist. Finally, he attained the Feet of Siva.

If we are sure of our goal and also sure of the Pathway, as has been clarified in our approach to Saiva Siddhantam, we must not halt but proceed to the summit to find the totality of the Truth of Siva, the synthesis of the working of the gracious Power of *Cit-Sakti*; and only then can we finally reach the journey's end, or as the Sastras would put it as the termination of the cycle of birth and death.

The *Sadhana* aphorisms in Sivajnana Botham, the cryptic manual of Saivism, advocate the obedience to laws temporal and eternal, at every stage of the involution of the anma, which in turn will affect the vital purification of consciousness in the material, moral-ethical, integral and spiritual dimensions. In other words, the Agamic stages of Cariya, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana margas in their cumulative effect, will unfold the pure potential Love, Will, Insight, and Wisdom - *Ichha, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana* within the anma, leading to the culminating Bliss in *Sivatvam*.

Revelations in Siva-Neri

The doctrine of the purified anma, with the heightening of its love unto Siva is the significant facet of Saiva Siddhantam. Tiruvarutpayan -The Fruit of Divine Grace, defines the state of Bliss-Anma Labham: VIII-LXXII-LXXIII.

“When the anma and the “Known” combine, it is bliss.”

“He gives bliss to those that draw nigh to Him.

His Form is perfect blessedness, nor can this be enhanced.”

The Lord imparts supreme felicity to those who draw near to Him in Love. These *Knowers* here know nothing but the *Known*.

“Within and without, Lo! divine Grave stands revealed.

Those who possess this mystic vision despise nothing;

X-XCVI.

Sivapragasam too declares, that to those who have attained divine wisdom, Siva stands revealed within, and is seen equally in outer forms as Lingam and other insignia, in which He reveals Himself. The purified anma does not despise any devices for realising the presence of the Immanent Siva.

Siva-neri bids us not only to *love*,

“But also, to *become Love*”

In other words, experiencing oneness with *Sivatvam*, the anma becomes attracted to the servitors of Siva-radiant human centres of love. Thus, allying with these positive forces, the liberated anma keeps at bay the negative forces of the world of change and decay.

Alternately, the presence of the community of the *Adiyar* (devout), who have shed the non-real is itself a strengthening factor, for the rest of the groping humanity. Their benign influence is contagious, and seekers in need of solace are drawn to them, so that the closed shutters of their consciousness may open out. Such is the cumulative effect of the elevating presence of *Sivanadiyar*. They live, move and have their being centered round the hub-wheel of Siva. In this way, the great mystery of *Anbe Sivam* - love art Sivam - has been resolved by the Saiva illumined Seers.

St. Manicavasagar has been one of the outstanding saints who have brought out the full significance of the love of Siva manifested in His five-fold, *Panca-Krytia* operations in the heart of man and in the cosmos. The Divine Will of Siva assumes the Power of Grace, concealed as well as revealed, and all activity of God springs from this source of Grace. Man comes to realise that he can only know the known through the experience of love. It is the supreme fulfilment, the act of surrender sublime, when his love and Siva's Grace encounter in an abiding communion. Finite love lays its offering of surrender at the footstool of Infinite Power and Grace. Siva's acts of creation, sustenance, dissolution, veiling and bestowal of grace are acts of the supreme Love of Sivam.

As we have stated, St. Manicavasagar testifies to the symphony of human life played on the major chord of Siva's *Tiruvarul* (grace). His Tiruvacagam and the Devaram Hymns of the Nayanmar set up responses in the inner being of men and lift them up into the domain of the bounteous love of Siva. The surrender of man's life to the Divine Love (Iccha-Sakti) is an act of fulfilment. What a wondrous evolution is depicted! Man, the imperfect being revolving on the axis of his deeds and deeply embedded in the mire of delusion, and at grips with the monstrous egoity, the inherent menace of the power that obstructs and impedes at every turn of his life is saved, liberated and lead to the refuge of His Feet. His Grace is assured. Witness the Lord with the crescent moon, the Ganges flowing over his matted locks, wearing on his left ear, the ear-ring of Sakti, "the mother of world-clusters and yet a virgin called." Such are the insignia of Grace, that adorn the Form of Siva.

Wherever His Grace works, there is His abode. Therefore, the great temples, the purificatory rivers and such symbols of His presence as the Linga, the Bull, the Trident, His healing Holy Ash and His Name are all powerful manifestations of His magnetic Love of man.

Dwelling at length on the Indweller and of the great Experience of commingling at His Golden Feet, the Anma, freed from the pangs of duality and freed from the taint of impurity, sings the jubilant song of at-one-ment. St. Manicavasagar conveys the bliss of inseparable union with the Lord Siva and His afferent power of Grace. Siva is the Mid-Point in whose centripetal power all souls revolve and adhere in union of never parting.

From the vortex of our concentrated study of seeing everything as Siva-*Sivamayam*, we moved on to understand the attainment of the inseparable union at the Feet of Siva *Siva Gathi*, as the ultimate goal of the Saivites.

Siva is Love serene; He is luminous Being; His is supernal Wisdom, Power and Will. The light within the anma illumined by His Grace beholds the resplendence of Siva-Sat, and experiences *Sivatvam* – the commingling in blissful communion.

A commentator on Sivajnana Botham observes tacitly:

“Those who have experienced *It* are silent:
Those who have not, utter indirect proofs
and expose their hollowness.”

It is imperative that we modify our approach to Saiva Siddhantam and rescue it from the abstruse researchers and bring it to the common man, mainly through the living Experiences of our Saiva Saints. A thorough study of their lives and teachings, their songs and experiences will be an all-rewarding accomplishment. There are many pathways leading to our non-dual life with Siva.

“Thy Own (Sakti) dwells in the centre as Thou in her mid-point.
Thee and Thine (Siva-Sakti) dwelleth in the centre of my being.
Bestow Thy Grace that I may dwell in the midst of thy servitors;
Thou of Ponnambalam. who is beginningless and Endless.
Thy Presence to guide me I crave
In fulfilment of my yearning so.”

- Tiruvacagam. 21.1.

The significance here is revealed in the key word “*Naduvul*” - the midpoint, the centre of being. The Power of Siva’s Grace is Centred in His Being. He and His Grace abide in the centre of all beings. The world rotates round His axis and man evolves in the orbit of Divine Will. Hence in the incantation of Siva’s Name-*Na Ma Si Va Ya, Si Va Ya Na Ma*, we note that the syllable *Ya* is in the mid-point with *Si-Va* on either side. That is to say, that *Ya* denoting the Anma is ever in the centre of the Reality of Being – *Si – Va*. Those freed from the taint of impurity yearn to be in the centre of the circle of Siva’s votaries in order to experience fully this indissoluble union with Siva – Sivajnana Botham XII.

Thus, Love of Siva has been our central theme, with the dynamic experience of Siva’s Grace as the vital link, and each one, according to his need and stage of development, can select his own particular pathway. Saivam is an inexhaustible study consisting of the three Entities which are beginningless and endless – Pati, Pasu, Pasam and which are unfathomable within and without.

“Who can know
if the Supreme Knower does not
illumine the inner being
in each one and make *It known*.”

The Accomplished End - Siddhantam

We have delved into many avenues of approach to the citadel of the Anma - the Essence of the deepest, innermost core of being, the true self of man. The End remains a closed secret to the commonalty of us. But to the knowers of Truth-the realised Seers called Siddhar, the veil behind the Chittam is rift asunder and they see with the eye of jnanam into the soul of truth, into the luminous light of Sivam. It is an accomplished End. Hence the secret of the philosophy of Saiva Siddh-Antam is embedded in Revelation.

What lies beyond the veil? Siva, the luminous Being illumining everything with the light of His Grace. Who has seen It? The Siddhar. How do we know it? Thus do the Saiva

Agamas and the Tirumurais and the Meikanda Sastras proclaim. Hence the study of Saiva Siddhantam points the Pathway to Siva, *Siva-Neri*, leading to the goal of the sacred Feet of Siva. It is both the Means and the End of life. For all lovers of Siva -*Saivites*, it is both a religion and a philosophy.

We close this section by reiterating that the cardinal teaching of Saiva Siddhantam is embedded in the lucid exposition of the relationship of the Anma to the immanent and transcendent *Pati*. In unravelling the layers that veil the imperishable Anma, the Siddhantin follows the well-trodden paths of *Cariya*, *Kriya*, *Yoga* and *Jnana-Margas*. We have tried to avoid comparisons and contrasts, analogies and inferences and concentrated on the Twelve Sutras of Sivajnana Botham, validated for all times by the astounding revelations of the Saiva Seers-the legion of Nayanmar, in their canzones and canticles.

“Namasivaya, word of God eternal,
Gracious Feet so holy, all hail.
Hail, holy Feet of Him
Who quits not my heart for a split second.
... ..
Hail Holy Feet of Him
Who draws nigh in grace, as wisdom of the Agamas,
The One in many and many in One art Thou,
Thou who with sovereign sway subdues my soul’s unrest,
Hallowed be Thy Feet.
Siva who vanquishes delusive births.
Thy omniscient Feet, All hail.
Thou who recedes from all who love not.
May Thy beauteous Feet for ever gleam,
Thou distilled joy of those who adore Thee
Victory to thy kingly Feet.
... ..
Praise be to the roseate Feet of Siva
May He be our solace.
Praise be to Thee, inmost Love so sublime.
Thy radiant Feet our repose be.”

Sivapuranam. 1-14.
Tiruvagasam.

These extraordinary experiences of the men of realisation in the Saiva-fold, have been integrated on the basis of the thirty-six *Tattvas* formulated by the Saiva philosophers. We should appreciate this reconciliation in the light of the great changes brought about by the theory of relativity in the field of mathematical physics and the resulting advancement in atomic physics and quantum theory.

The revealing experiences of Tirumular, Nayanmar and the Santanachariyar bring to the limelight, how Siddhanta Saivam had long ago established the philosophical basis and the metaphysical law governing the truths testified by modern scientists. Saiva seers have affirmed the reality of the external and the internal worlds and have communicated their irrefutable experiences of both the outer and inner domains in the Tirumurais Twelve and the Fourteen Sastras.

Their revelations, aided by the power of Divine Grace have enabled the Saiva Siddhantins today to understand fully the metaphysical findings of modern scientists like Whitehead and Sir James Jeans; and at the same time have helped modern scientists to recognise the adequacy of the metaphysics and philosophy of Siddhanta Saivam, and its unique contribution to the realistic systems of World Thought.

பெருமைக்கும் நுண்மைக்கும் பேரருட்கும்
பேற்றின் அருமைக்கும் ஒப்பின்மையான்

- Tiru arul payan.

Siva the pinnacle of Siddhanta Saivam is peerless in Grace, Excellence and Grandeur, and He beckons man to turn his gaze from the false to the True.

12. THE GRANDEUR THAT IS SAIVAM

Saivam is the religion of the Hindus who worship Siva as the absolute *Para Sivam*. Siva means auspiciousness, beneficence and bliss through His Grace - form known as *Tiruvadi* (sakti). and is forever engaged in the rescue of souls (anma) from the bondage of matter and the three impurities (malam) which defile their purity. Siva is the Lord of all souls, *Pasupati*. He knows all, does all and is the author as well as the destroyer of all. He who is eternally 'beyond', can assume any form He pleases out of His Grace divine.

“That He is of this manner, form and colour
With eyes of Grace alone can one comprehend.
Beyond this. His form, nature and being
Not in any word or picture are truly writ”.

- St. Appar, 97.10.

Thus Siva-Paramesvara who enjoys the prerogative of many names and forms is recognised by His worshippers as the 'Supreme One reigning over the Triunity'.

It is not possible to project where Saivam begins and where it ends. Age has not decayed it. Rival religions have not destroyed it. The Vedas and Agamas proclaim that at the time of the great deluge, *Mahapralaya*, He alone Is. Thus, we see that the Saiva religion has neither nativity like Wesak or Christmas, nor native land, even though the Saivites in South India fondly claim Him as their chosen Lord, not forgetting thereby that He is Sovereign Lord of the entire cosmos:

“Hail Lord of the South, O Siva
Hail Lord of the entire Universe”.

- Tiruvagasam, 4. 164-165.

The Brahman proclaimed in the Upanisads, Samhitas and Puranas is the transcendent Siva: “Sivam parathparam Brahmaprameya manupamam”, declares the *Karanagama*. The Sambhu, Sadasiva, Rudra, Mahadeva, Visvesvara, Isana, Sankara are some of the popular names of Siva who is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient and extolled in the Vedic mantras and Agamic tantras.

“Thou art the quintessence of wisdom supernal”.

- St. Appar

Tirumular enunciates in his classic Text of Saivam known as *Tirumantiram*, the practical way of life upheld by a true Saivite – Siva Neri. It is the grammar, a veritable source book for every follower of Saivam, whereas the Twelve Tirumurai collections of sacred hymns of the Saiva Nayanmar (Saints) form the literature, and the fourteen Sastras known as Meikanda treatises reflect the science of truth relating to the metaphysics of Saivam.

The Saiva tradition exercises a tremendous appeal to the modern man as an effective way of life, authenticated by the experiences of the many Saiva saints and seers, who blazed a trail of glory down the ages, and who validated for all times the Truth that art Sivam. These liberated seers – jivan muktas – sustain the dynamics of the Saiva faith, undiminished down the ladder of time.

Siva Neri is thus based on the validity of direct experience. The author of Tirumantiram urges the true votaries of Siva to verify, prove and hold fast to the verities revealed in the value-experiences, provided it works and satisfies man's quest in all directions, at all times and at varying levels of his spiritual evolution. *Siva Neri* is not an exclusive religious path meant only for the few, but a way for Everyman whose interests range from the universe, the macrocosm, to the microcosm of the inner man. Saivam comprises of devotional worship, belief in the Reality of *Siva* and in the eternal entities of *Anma* and the Bonds or *Pasam*.

Siddhanta Saivam conceives Reality in three ultimately irreducible modes. These are *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pasam*. The central purport of *Pasu* or Anma is to realize *Pati*, the supreme Lord, and it accomplishes this End by overcoming *Pasam*. *Pati* is both transcendent as well as immanent in the conditions of life finite and existence which constitutes man's bondage.

As immanent in the finite existence, Siva is conceived as the Gracious One, who saves man from the fetters of bondage, which envelopes his conditioned existence. Man's quest is to free himself from the primordial cause of these conditions, which constitute the core of man's bondage!

Pasam consists of the objective world of existence, as well as the subjective spheres, controlled by Time and the world of moral causation involving the sequence between action and its result which sustains the phenomenal world of existence, through the operation of death and birth. *Pasam* also includes the realm of pure matter, which while partaking of the empirical world of existence, also mediates between the Infinite Self and the finite man, and lastly *Pasam* implies a primordial and positive condition of impurity which has been clouding the self of man beginninglessly, and thereby dominating the life of man. These species of bonds or *pasam* are known as *Malam*, *Karma* and *Maya-Suddha* and *Asuddha*, and together with *Pasu* (Anma) and *Pati* (Sivam) constitute the Eternal verities of Saivism.

It stresses the need for a righteous life which shall fructify in loving relationships with our fellowmen.

"Saivam knows not the discord of disputations:"

- Sivajnana Siddhiar, 8.2.3.

The sacred books of the Saiva faith extol Saivam as the religion of beautiful harmony, and this truth has been expressed in lucid poetry by St. Tayumanavar in canto 14.10.

The Saiva Pathway

'Sivam emits the sweetest fragrance in the soul of man'. So Tirumantram declares:

"The high purport of human life is to worship
Him who is Love".

- Sivajnana Botham, II.

"The assurance of Thy all-embracing Love
Alone can set my soul at ease and peace".

- Tiruvagam, 25.10.

The Saiva code of life had laid down some two thousand and more years ago that the Love of Siva, outflowing as the love of our fellow-men, formed the basis of man's conduct and dutiful action, *Cariya* and *Kriya*, constituting what is known as *Siva Dharma*. From this pinnacle stood Kanniyar Punguntranar of Purananuru fame, who lived during the Sangam age and who exclaimed:

“Everywhere our abode; everyone our kith and kin.
Ill-will and good-will follow not actions of others.
Dying is not strange; nor living enjoyable;
Misery is not to be despised.
The immortal soul moves onward.
Guided in its assigned path-
So do the enlightened seers discern”.

Siva is the *cognitive* energy, while Sakti is conative. Siva is the substrata and His Sakti is the attribute. Siva and Sakti assume the symbols of *Nada* and *Bindu* which are represented in the Siva temples as Linga and Pitha. From this metaphysics of Saivam, is derived the whole hierarchy of values, and the Saiva notion of a homogenous and meaningful world. ‘This world means intensely and means well’. Saivam affirms the essential unity of God-Siva – “His immanence in the universe of matter, with its thirty-six categories at play, and His lotus seat in the heart of man”. Saiva Samaya Neri, I.

Siva is One in Himself. The whole world and man are One in Him, being the outflow of His Grace, and always sustained by Him:

Siva is the ‘motionless mover’ through the operation of His Grace; in other words, the Power of Sakti, of every act of the *thinking, feeling* and *acting* man.

The enlightened and exemplary Saiva Saints of ancient, mediaeval and modern periods, by their wondrous revelations expressed in songs and cantos, bore witness to Siva's manifold acts of Grace, and invoked His holy presence at every split second of their lives:

“To ponder on Thee is hard for human thought ...
To us in Presence come, save us from ills.
In Love, make us thine”.

- Tiruvassagam, 20. V.

The incantations of our Nayanmars chime with the impact of the Saiva faith in our daily relationships. The Devaram, Tiruvassagam and Tirumurai are the living testament of the ever-living presence of Siva-Paramesvara, in every minutest particle of being on this earth. These Saiva seers have enshrined in their sacred songs, Siva's advaitic, all pervasive quality and His inseparable relationship with each one of us, linking our past yesterdays and unborn tomorrows with the eternal Present.

The Mandukya Upanishad penetrates the radiance of Sivam as “Santam-Advaitam.” In Sivanandalahari, Sri Sankara Bhagavat Pada extols Siva-Sambhu, the world Guru, as conferring the boon of eternal bliss to men who walk in the path of *Siva neri*, protected by the armor of righteous conduct, fearless duty and integral union with ‘I-It and Thou’:

“Tvat Padam puram archayami
Brahmantvam chintayam Yanvauram”.

- Sivanandalahari, 29.

Again, in the famous sloka 28, Siva – Mahadeva grants the boon of His Grace in varying degrees of enjoyment. Siva’s relationship with the anma is that of Oneness and that of advaitic union, and that of apartness from the soul.

There is a poignant gem in Tirumantiram, where Tirumular addresses the soul-Anma, as Saivam and delineates this nature of intrinsic relationship of the soul as Saivam with Sivam. This is the supreme experience, *anubhava* of all illumined saints and seers: Vide-Tirumantiram, 1512.

Saivam makes a powerful plea for inner devotion, so that the blooms of worship may lead a man to realise the Sivam within himself. This in short is the crux of Siddhantam, the accomplished End.

The Guruparamparai

That Siva is the informing Spirit of the soul, just as the soul is the informing spirit of the bod, is the quintessence of Saivam as revealed by the *Guruparamparai*.

“Have you seen the Lord
Who is mingled with the
Seeing Light of my eye?”

- Natchintanai.

The Satgurus communicate their manifold experience as well as that of the *Sivanubhuti* of the Siva Seers, the *Arivar* and *Tapathar*, as they were called in Tholkappiam, and by the *Nayanmar* whose canticles were enshrined in the sanctum sanctorum of the *Tirumurai* including Periyapuram. They demonstrate the beauty of supreme well-being, and the excellence of the *Sivanadiyar*, “the faithful of Siva, who night and day get immersed in the melting love of Siva” Tiruvacagam, V. 56.

In the Hindu tradition, it is the Guru who lets in the light. The Siva-Guru is the source of enlightenment as well as the embodiment of intelligence and grace:

“Who will know if the benevolent lord doth
Not vouchsafe His Grace?”

- Tirumantiram 1579

The Guru is vertically Siva’s form of Grace. In Faith, which is the conformity of the Intelligence and the Will to the revealed Truths, the Guru becomes an object of Faith in a dogmatic form, the very essence of Truth:

“The Guru indeed is the peerless Sivam
Who transcends speech and thought, the King Supreme”.

- Tirumantiram, 1581

“Siva’s glorious splendour, whom none can experience
Save those that Love.
His pure blossom – Feet like a luminous jewel
Adorns my head”.

- Tiruvasagam, 42.1

“The Guru dwelt as Sivam, He Is;
Immanent is He everywhere
He is aware of the Lord’s Will
As prevailing beyond the grip of Time
The Eternal Being is the Guru.

- Tirumantiram, I.27

The Servitors of Siva proclaimed, “See Good, Do Good and Be Good and you will feel the impact of Grace.” The ineffable Light of Intelligence so full of resplendence, Parasivam, will penetrate the dark recess of the soul in Grace, and then the exalted anma will be in inseparable union with the effulgent Light of Truth, and realise the gleam of fadeless bliss.

We may not realise the goal in this life, but Saivam beckons one and all to step up from the valley of the shadow of doubt, despair and death by singing Siva’s glory and chanting His name:

“Thou did freely bestow the ambrosia of Grace
And in my haste, I gulped down a heapful.
Then it was my lot to gasp and choke.
Oh! Revive me with thy life-giving waters,
And save me from this suffocation dire.
Alas my Keeper, be Thou Thy bondsman’s refuge.”

- Tiruvasagam, 24.10

Saivam does not make the soul, the measure of all things. Human knowledge, *Pasujnanam* is limited and imperfect, and therefor the Saivan starts with Siva, the supreme *Sat* as the measure of man; the universal *Chit* is the measure of all individual existence. Nothing is human that is not determined by the divine and therefore centered on it. “Thy will be done”, *Ellam Sivan ceyal*” - The Will of Siva is supreme. Without His Will, there cannot be any movement, good or evil; there will be no enjoyment, no plenitude in this life, nor the freedom of release from suffering. The sacrifice of Daksha, the extension of the span of life for Markandeya, Siva’s quaffing the poison to save the Devas and Asuras from destruction, and the vanquishing of Ravana’s conceited valor – all these symbolically prove that without the Will of Siva nothing can succeed; nothing can be attained.

The vision of Reality in principle is comprehensible, yet it cannot be comprehended by man without the aid of Siva’s illuminating Grace. In fact, Saivites acclaim of one accord, that they feel and know and live their lives on earth with the knowledge that it is NOT their intellect, which penetrates Siva, but it is Siva who penetrates their intellect. No one can choose God who has not been chosen by Him. Because Siva and souls are intelligent and pervasive, the relation between the pervader and the pervaded is intimate. The relation is one of identity in difference, because there is difference between Siva and souls, and yet they are inseparable.

As one experiences His *arul*, grace; the more does his love of the Lord and the fellow beings increase boundlessly. It is this undying flame of Love, that fills the soul with bliss and is known as *Patijnanam*. In Sivapragasam, one of the fourteen treatises on Saiva Siddhantam, we get a lucid delineation of the non-dual union of God and the world and God and the soul.

Such union will be comparable in their *unity* to the seeing power of the eye by means of the soul; in their *diversity* to the light of the eye and the light of the sun; in their *concomitance* to the knowing power of the soul and the seeing power of the eye. Such an experience will be realizable as the fruit of a course of righteous practice ordained in the great Saiva Texts on the luminous wisdom of Siva. This is the metaphysical import of Saivam.

Who is a Saivite?

He is a Saivite who believes that Siva is the absolute Principle of Unity, which binds all thinking things, all objects of thought; which is at once the source of being to all things that are, and of knowing to all things that know and is the ultimate principle of Intelligence. That is the meaning underlying the sacred Ash. He is a Saivite who believes in the potency of the *Letters Five*, *Sri Panchakshara*, *Aum Namasivaya Sivayanama*.

By chanting the Letters Five, the soul will rest in God's succor. This is the Sadhana for the purification of the soul.

“Those who repeat it while love's tears outpour,
It gives them life and guides them in the way.

“Tis the true substance of the Vedas four,
The Lord's great name, wherefore chant- Hail Siva”.

- St. Jnanasambandar 3.49.1

The repetition of the name of the Lord Siva enables the soul to become subdued in Siva's immanence; that is the secret of the potency of the Letters Five.

“He who is Consciousness, Existence and Bliss,
He who is beyond the world of being and becoming.
He who is all pervasive and known by the sound of Brahman
He is Siva-Peruman”.

- Ajitagama.

In full surrender, Saivam calls upon all Saivites to invoke the name of Siva as the talisman for a goodly life: Under the canopy of His Grace, St. Appar proclaims that

“The Holy Name of Siva is my armor
And I repeat the Letters-Five ceaselessly.”

- St. Appar, 4.83.8.

The Saiva Saints, the exalted sixty-three *Nayanmar*, shared their blessed spiritual experiences with their fellow men in the course of their fruitful pada-yatras, or pilgrimages on foot, and brought the Wisdom, Love and Truth of Siva from the sequestered custody of the priests and rulers to the common people. Their message of love and service infused new life

and dynamism into the Saiva religion at a time when it was rocked by the onslaughts of other creeds and cults like Jainism and Buddhism.

We affirm here that Saiva Mb encompasses belief and devotion, with certitude and knowledge. A true Saivite believes in the revealed truths contained in the *Vedas*, *Agamas*, *Tirumurais* and the *Sastras*, as also on the veracity of exalted personal experiences. St. Manicavasagar revels on the initiation into the sacred name of Siva with all its connotations, as the grace of His Guru who gave him the word *incarnate*:

“Did I perform any worthy acts of worship,
Did I merit initiation of Sivayanama?
“I” was his divine grace”.

- Tiruvvasagam, 38.10

The supernal world of God is revealed through a Guru whose task is to actualize an ever-present being. It gains efficacy as it comes from revelation, and is capable of being renewed. The effect is always impregnated in the cause. God and His Name are one. Meditation of the Five Letters *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya* or *Si-Va-Ya-Na-Ma*, keeps the contact between God and soul, between Intelligence and Truth in the absolute and relative at the point of intersection. For Sivam, the letters Five, *Namasivaya* is the principle of manifestation and the word of Grace. For man, the remembrance of Siva is the ascent and plentitude; and this remembrance is encompassed in two dimensions: *Nada* or the name of Siva and *Bindu* the Holy Feet, the Symbol of Grace personified as *Siva-Sakti*, the power of Siva.

Such is the consciousness of the Absolute. The Name and the Feet actualize this consciousness and perpetuates it in the soul, so that it penetrates the whole being and at the same time transmutes and absorbs it. Remembrance is the form of advaita yearned for by all *Jivan Muktas*. Karaikal Ammaiyar extols this attainment thus:

“Undying, blissful love, I yearn for.
Not to be born, but if birth were inevitable.
Not to forget Thee, Ever in remembrance
Of Thee, let me sing at Thy Feet,
And enjoy Thy dance forever”.

- St. Karaikal Ammaiyar

The remembrance of His Name tunes the anma to the enjoyment of unity. There can be no advaitic unity without Love and submission to His Will.

We affirm with certitude that to love Siva is to realise in ourselves the divine presence. To love God’s devotees is to love them as an aspect of our love for God, and by virtue of His Love for us, to abolish the illusory distinction between ‘Me and Mine’. When we love God’s immanence which we are truly, Siva reveals Himself in us; broken are the barriers that separate us from our neighbors and therein what separates us from Siva who is Love incarnate is also removed. If a Saivite is bidden to love God more than himself, it is because love exists prior to his own self and he is its issue. He loves by virtue of his very existence. He loves only by God, and for God. *Anbe Sivam* - Love art Sivam indeed. Whoever loves the cause, thereby loves that which makes the effects lovable, namely the Cause which through positive qualities manifests itself in them.

In loving the divine Cause, the Saivites love that which makes things on earth lovable. Love for the cause demands from them love for the effects. It is the Cause which they must love as abiding within each and everyone. This is the meaning of St. Tirumular's famous psalm:

“Sivam and love are not two
Love and Sivam are inseparable
No one knows how love merges in Sivam
Sivam is love par excelsis.

- Tirumantiram, 270.

This is the Saiva Testament of Love. This is the Truth of Siva. This love is vertical in that it is intrinsically united to the divine presence. It is horizontal in the fellowship with the Sivanadiyar, devotees of Siva, who see Him in everything, everywhere. In this beautiful state, man sheds the narrow limitations of self-hood, self-expression and expands into the sanctified presence of Siva and shines in the glory of Sivam. Thus, he who loves the principle, thereby loves the manifestation of the principle. To inherit Siva's love, man must abide by His Will. He has to surmount at its most sensitive point, the egocentric illusion, *anavam*, which is at the basis of all imperfections. This is the true import of the owner and owned, *Aandan-Adimai* relationship, as viewed from a revealed spiritual perspective of an ardent Saivite:

“Thou gavest Thyself to myself. Thee”.
And Thou didst take me and mine unto Thee”.

The outflow of the Grace of God calls for an ever-remembered love of God on our part. By the same token, it calls for a gift of love from us to our fellow beings as a sequel to what God has given us. God wants nothing from us and yet everything – the *anma* with Himself in each one of us. It is the perpetual remembrance of the Beneficent Siva. His Name and His Acts that constitute the symphony of Saivam. His Divine Nature is what it is, and is expressed by the Name. His Divine Will on the other hand projects into the world, differentiated, and corresponds according to the complexity of human nature, and the stages of man's elimination from the threefold defilement of *Anavam* (I-ness) *Karma* and *Maya*.

The Saiva Neri

Saivam is a ritual marga, a bhakti marga, a yoga marga and a jnana marga, and each Saivite chooses his own pathway as befits his temperament, background and development. St. Jnanasambandar, St. Appar, St. Sundarar and St. Manicavasagar demonstrated in their lives and teachings, in their songs and service, the path ways of the *Dasa*-servant, *Satputra*-son, *Saha*-friend, and *Sanmarga*-two-in one. These stages are all based on the *anma*'s love of Siva in His transcendent and immanent aspects.

Saiva Siddhanta which postulates God's transcendency and immanence appeals both to the peasant and the philosopher. The great Siva-jnanis opened new vistas of the mantra-Svarupa of Siva in their Devaram songs, and drew masses of people to follow temple worship. Above all they revealed the love of Siva and the truth of His Gracious Feet, symbolizing His great mercy to man, and thereby imprinted the code of righteous life. *Sanmarga* which is also the code of service to our fellowmen, to the forefront of dynamic Saivam. Vide Tirumantiram, 1478.

Saivam advocates worship of the Supreme Siva at all times and at all places. Let the true Saivites join the society of Bhaktas and love them and serve them and worship their forms and the Form in the Saiva temples. This is the only way to worship Him, who is beyond thought and speech. It is not possible to KNOW God. Yet in our hearts we yearn to worship and glorify Him. He is Omnipresent, and is one with or in Advaitic relation with everything animate and inanimate. His Great Effulgence Paramjyoti is non-apparent. But in the hearts of realized seers and *Jivan Muktas*, God's presence is so dynamic that they are venerated as the walking temples of God. St. Sundarar in canto 39.10 bids the Saivites to worship Siva in forms that accentuate their love.

It is the undying vision of the great Saiva Preceptors that they sought to integrate and harmonize the fundamental tenets of Saivam. The objective or the eternal fact of Revelation that makes up the collectivity of Saivism has been integrated to the subjective or internal vision of intellection within the framework of its ontological premises. They are linked together. The sufficient reason for the miracles of the Saiva, Shakta, Ganapathi, and Muruga saints, is to start a train of evidence, and the miracle appears to intellectual certainty like a projection of that certainty on the plane of facts and symbols.

The doctrinal significance of dogmas, no one can deny or refute. The illustrious Saiva Saints from the various sub-sects gave Saivism the unifying alchemy of a mystical function, and dogmatic divergencies correspond to differences in spiritual method. Their confrontation of different dogmatic systems brought out the validity that dogmas confer not only ideas, but also essentially 'manners of Being'. Man is made to know one Sun, and to live by it, and not to experience each of the innumerable suns of the galaxy. Providence has enclosed man in one traditional system just as he enclosed *Aditiya* in one solar system. But that does not alter the fact either that the diversity of spiritual systems is metaphysically necessary as that of the cosmic systems.

Man seeks at every moment of his timed existence on earth, the timeless actuality of the Divine Presence, and blessed is the man who has clasped His Holy Feet, *Sivan Sevadi*, and attained an eternity of blessedness.

To see the Oneness of Sivam is to see at the same time our own nothingness, and to realise the oneness of Siva and Anma. To become intensely aware of our oneness with Siva in devotion and wisdom is the supreme End of Saivam:

There is - "One God, Sivan;
 One Law, Saiva Neethi;
 One element, Sivamayam;
 One grace, Tiruvadi;
 One divine event, Sivan cheyal;
 One word, Siva".

to which the whole creation moves, and so moves to the human caravanseri to the supreme goal of Siva's Bliss. This is Saiva Neri. It is Siva Neri; also, it is Mukthi Neri; Jnana Neri and Arul Neri - All in One. St. Pattinattu Pillayar depicts the realised man's final experience and beatitude in the following psalm of great beauty:

“The Grace of God infused my being
And cut off delusion’s might.
Thereafter I discerned within
The longing for high wisdom’s holy light;
Obtaining which I beheld Thy Form,
Beholding, gained imperceptibly
The vision of my very soul.
And lo, that moment I attained
To such high knowing that I began to see
All men, all things, as truly they are;
Truly I saw Thee in Thy fullness, no part but whole”.
